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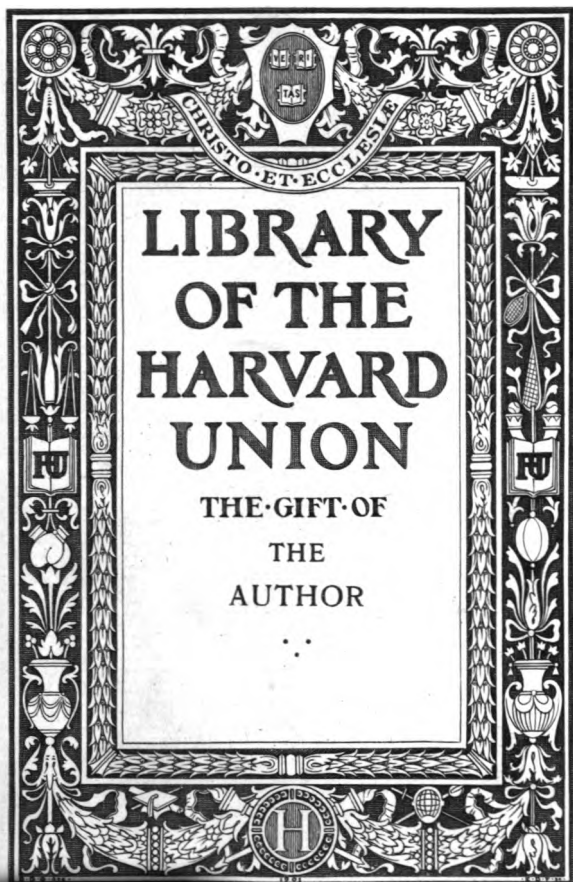
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LOVER'S
YEAR-BOOK
OF
POETRY
Poems of the
Other Life

July.
August.
September
October.
November
December



KD 43850



THE LOVER'S
YEAR-BOOK OF POETRY

THE LOVER'S YEAR-BOOK OF POETRY

A Collection of Love Poems for
Every Day in the Year

By HORACE PARKER CHANDLER

First Series.

Vol. I. January to June. Bicolor, \$1.25; white and gold, \$1.50.

Vol. II. July to December. Bicolor, \$1.25; white and gold, \$1.50.

Second Series.

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Third Series.

Vol. I. January to June. Bicolor, \$1.25; white and gold, \$1.50.

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The Poems in the First Series touch upon LOVE PRIOR TO MARRIAGE; those in the Second Series are of MARRIED-LIFE AND CHILD-LIFE; and the Third Series comprises Poems of THE OTHER LIFE.

ROBERTS BROTHERS, BOSTON.

THE LOVER'S
YEAR-BOOK OF POETRY

A Collection of Love Poems for
Every Day in the Year

THE OTHER LIFE

BY
HORACE PARKER CHANDLER

VOL. II.
JULY TO DECEMBER

BOSTON
ROBERTS BROTHERS
1896

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University Press :
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE, U.S. A.

To the Beloved.

OH, THOU WHOSE PRECIOUS MEMORY NEEDS NO SPEECH
WHILE LOVE WHICH FOLLOWS IT NONE CAN IMPART,
IF THESE POOR WORDS MAY FIND THEE WHERE THOU ART,
WHAT THEY WOULD SAY, BUT CANNOT, NEEDS MUST REACH

THY BEING'S CORE. THE GRIEF WHICH MOANS IN EACH
AND CHOKES ITS OWN BEST UTTERANCE, THE SMART
THAT STINGS BEYOND ALL TELLING, THY TRUE HEART
WILL TO ITSELF WITH FAULTLESS PRESCIENCE TEACH.

SMALL MEANING MAY THEY TO ALL ELSE TRANSMIT;
BUT THOU WILT IN THEM SEEM TO TOUCH MY HAND
AND SEEK MY GLANCE TO CURE THE WOE IN IT.

EVEN THOUGH TEARS BE UNKNOWN IN THAT LAND,
THINE EYES MUST FILL, SINCE, READING WHAT IS WRIT,
WHAT IS NOT WRITTEN THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.

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List of Authors.

	PAGE
Dedicatory . . . ARLO BATES	iii

JULY.

July		2
First	INA D. COOLBRITH	3
Second	WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT	4
Third	KATE PUTNAM OSGOOD	5
Fourth	EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN . . .	6
Fifth	HENRY STODDARD WENTWORTH . .	7
Sixth	HELEN FISKE-HUNT-JACKSON . . .	8
Seventh		10
Eighth	MARIA UPHAM DRAKE	11
Ninth	CAROLINE BOWLES SOUTHEY . . .	12
Tenth	ERNEST WARBURTON SHURTLEFF .	13
Eleventh	JOHN WESTALL	14
Twelfth	CAROLINE ARMSTRONG WALKER . .	15
Thirteenth	HORACE PARKER CHANDLER . . .	16
Fourteenth	ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER	18
Fifteenth	LOUISE CHANDLER-MOULTON . . .	19
Sixteenth	ALGERNON SASSIN	20
Seventeenth	A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK	21
Eighteenth	JOHN WHITE CHADWICK	22
Nineteenth	CARYL BATTERSBY	24
Twentieth		24
Twenty-First	ERNEST WARBURTON SHURTLEFF .	25
Twenty-Second		26

July (<i>continued</i>).		PAGE
Twenty-Third	LOUISE CHANDLER-MOULTON . . .	27
Twenty-Fourth	. . . . .	28
Twenty-Fifth	JEAN INGELOW	30
Twenty-Sixth	JEAN INGELOW	30
Twenty-Seventh	JAMES ASHCROFT NOBLE	31
Twenty-Eighth	ELLA WHEELER-WILCOX	32
Twenty-Ninth	. . . . .	33
Thirtieth	JEAN INGELOW	34
Thirty-First	. . . . .	35

AUGUST.

August	WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY . . .	38
First	MINOT JUDSON SAVAGE	39
Second	M. E. PAULL	40
Third	MARTHA JANE PACKARD-FARWELL	41
Fourth	JOHN HENRY NEWMAN	42
Fifth	. . . . .	43
Sixth	JOHN WHITE CHADWICK	45
Seventh	EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH .	46
Eighth	JOHN STIRLING	48
Ninth	ROSE TERRY COOKE	49
Tenth	HORACE PARKER CHANDLER . .	51
Eleventh	FREDERIC PETERSEN	52
Twelfth	. . . . .	53
Thirteenth	MARY ASHLEY TOWNSEND . . .	54
Fourteenth	ROBERT LEIGHTON	55
Fifteenth	. . . . .	56
Sixteenth	REGINALD FANSHAWE	57
Seventeenth	OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES . . .	59
Eighteenth	EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN . .	60
Nineteenth	LOUISE CHANDLER-MOULTON . .	61

<i>August (continued).</i>	PAGE
Twentieth . . . JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS . . .	63
Twenty-First . . . C. ABBY MORRISON-WEBB . . .	64
Twenty-Second . . . MARY BERRI CHAPMAN . . .	65
Twenty-Third . . . ALICE C. THOMPSON-MEYNELL . . .	67
Twenty-Fourth . . . CHRISTINA CATHERINE LIDDELL . . .	68
Twenty-Fifth . . . SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE . . .	68
Twenty-Sixth . . . JOHN WHITE CHADWICK . . .	69
Twenty-Seventh . . . ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER . . .	70
Twenty-Eighth . . . LIONEL JOHNSON . . .	71
Twenty-Ninth . . . ROBERT LEIGHTON . . .	72
Thirtieth . . . CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI . . .	74
Thirty-First . . . E. BLAIR OLIPHANT . . .	74

SEPTEMBER.

September . . .	HORACE PARKER CHANDLER . . .	78
First . . .	WILLIAM CHANNING GANNETT . . .	76
Second . . .	ANNE REEVE ALDRICH . . .	80
Third . . .	LIONEL JOHNSON . . .	81
Fourth . . .	. . . . .	82
Fifth . . .	ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH . . .	84
Sixth . . .	ELIZABETH RUNDLE CHARLES . . .	85
Seventh . . .	MINOT JUDSON SAVAGE . . .	88
Eighth . . .	. . . . .	89
Ninth . . .	ALICE CARY . . .	90
Tenth . . .	SARAH CHAUNCEY WOOLSEY . . .	91
Eleventh . . .	CHRISTINA CATHERINE LIDDELL . . .	93
Twelfth . . .	ALFRED TENNYSON . . .	94
Thirteenth . . .	HORACE PARKER CHANDLER . . .	95
Fourteenth . . .	ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER . . .	96
Fifteenth . . .	. . . . .	98

September <i>(continued)</i> .	PAGE
Sixteenth	99
Seventeenth . . . E. R. CHAPMAN	100
Eighteenth . . . ROBERT LEIGHTON	101
Nineteenth . . . DINAH MARIA MULOCK-CRAIK	102
Twentieth . . . HELEN FISKE-HUNT-JACKSON	103
Twenty-First	104
Twenty-Second . . WILLIAM SYDNEY WALKER	106
Twenty-Third	106
Twenty-Fourth . . RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH	107
Twenty-Fifth . . WILLIAM GAY	108
Twenty-Sixth . . CHARLES SWAIN	109
Twenty-Seventh . . REGINALD FANSHAWE	110
Twenty-Eighth	111
Twenty-Ninth . . SARAH DOUDNEY	112
Thirtieth . . . LILIAN WHITING	113

OCTOBER.

October	ERNEST WARBURTON SHURTLEFF	118
First		119
Second	MACKENZIE BELL	120
Third	ANNE REEVE ALDRICH	121
Fourth	LILIAN WHITING	122
Fifth		122
Sixth	INA D. COOLBRITH	124
Seventh	SARAH CHAUNCEY WOOLSEY	125
Eighth	MINOT JUDSON SAVAGE	126
Ninth	JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS	128
Tenth	JANE LIPPITT PATTERSON	129
Eleventh		130
Twelfth	EDWIN ARNOLD	132

October (continued).	PAGE
Thirteenth . . . ERNEST MCGAFFEY	133
Fourteenth . . . AUGUSTA WEBSTER	134
Fifteenth . . . HENRY TIMROD	135
Sixteenth . . . HELEN MARIA WINSLOW	137
Seventeenth	138
Eighteenth . . . JOHN DRYDEN	138
Nineteenth . . . WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY	139
Twentieth . . . ALFRED TENNYSON	140
Twenty-First	142
Twenty-Second . . . GEORGE KLINGLE	144
Twenty-Third . . . EMMA MARSHALL	145
Twenty-Fourth . . . SARAH CHAUNCEY WOOLSEY	146
Twenty-Fifth . . . HENRY THURSTON PECK	148
Twenty-Sixth . . . A. M. F. ROBINSON-DARMESTER	149
Twenty-Seventh . . . LILIAN W. CARTER	150
Twenty-Eighth . . . AUGUSTA WEBSTER	151
Twenty-Ninth	152
Thirtieth . . . JOHN WHITE CHADWICK	152
Thirty-First . . . JOHN WHITE CHADWICK	153

NOVEMBER.

November	158
First . . . C. G. FAGAN	159
Second . . . OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES	160
Third . . . CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI	161
Fourth . . . EMMA ROOD-TUTTLE	162
Fifth . . . GEORGE HERBERT	164
Sixth . . . WILLIAM WETMORE STORY	165
Seventh . . . CELIA LAIGHTON-THAXTER	166
Eighth . . . LEWIS MORRIS	168

November (<i>continued</i>).		PAGE
Ninth	KATE PUTNAM-OSGOOD	169
Tenth	FRANK LOWE PHALEN	171
Eleventh	HORATIUS BONAR	172
Twelfth . . . .	. . . . .	174
Thirteenth . . . .	. . . . .	176
Fourteenth	WILLIAM WETMORE STORY	177
Fifteenth	WILLIAM HOWITT	179
Sixteenth	EDGAR EVERTON SALTUS	180
Seventeenth	JAMES BERRY BENSEL	180
Eighteenth . . . .	. . . . .	181
Nineteenth	ELIZABETH BARRETT-BROWNING	182
Twentieth	JOHN PIERPONT	184
Twenty-First . . . .	. . . . .	186
Twenty-Second	LIONEL JOHNSON	187
Twenty-Third	MARGARET ELIZABETH SANGSTER	188
Twenty-Fourth	AUGUSTA G. WINTHROP	189
Twenty-Fifth	MINOT JUDSON SAVAGE	190
Twenty-Sixth . . . .	. . . . .	191
Twenty-Seventh	GEORGE W. BETTHUNE	192
Twenty-Eighth	BLANCO WHITE	194
Twenty-Ninth	JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL	195
Thirtieth	ARLO BATES	196

DECEMBER.

December . . . .	. . . . .	200
First . . . .	. . . . .	201
Second	ROBERT LEIGHTON	202
Third	JULIA SCHAYER	203
Fourth	RICHARD MONCKTON MILNES	204
Fifth	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY	206
Sixth	GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP	208

December (*continued*).

PAGE

Seventh . . .	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY . . .	209
Eighth . . .		210
Ninth . . .	JOHN WESTALL . . .	211
Tenth . . .		212
Eleventh . . .	ROSE HAWTHORNE-LATHROP . .	214
Twelfth . . .	FREDERIC PETERSEN . . .	215
Thirteenth . . .		216
Fourteenth . .	EDITH M. THOMAS . . .	217
Fifteenth . . .		218
Sixteenth . . .		219
Seventeenth . .	ROBERT LEIGHTON . . .	220
Eighteenth . .	FREDERICK GEORGE SCOTT . .	221
Nineteenth . .	WALT WHITMAN . . .	222
Twentieth . . .	AUBREY DE VERE . . .	224
Twenty-First . .	MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN . . .	224
Twenty-Second .	JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY . . .	225
Twenty-Third . .	SARAH CHAUNCEY WOOLSEY . .	226
Twenty-Fourth .	FRANK FOXCROFT . . .	227
Twenty-Fifth . .	ALICE CARY . . .	228
Twenty-Sixth . .		228
Twenty-Seventh .	MARY WOOLSEY HOWLAND . .	229
Twenty-Eighth . .		230
Twenty-Ninth . .		231
Thirtieth . . .		232
Thirty-First . .	ANNA COLLIER LEE . . .	233

A WEEK OF SONNETS.

Sunday Morning	ERNEST WARBURTON SHURTLEFF	242
Evening	FRANK LEYTON	243
Monday Morning		244
Evening	L. MORRISON GRANT	245
Tuesday Morning	LUCY WHITE JENNISON	246
Evening	WILLIAM GAY	247
Wednesday Morning	MARY THACHER HIGGINSON	248
Evening		249
Thursday Morning	ARLO BATES	250
Evening	ERIC MACKAY	251
Friday Morning	HELEN FISKE-HUNT-JACKSON	252
Evening	JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL	253
Saturday Morning		254
Evening		255
Finale	HELEN FISKE-HUNT-JACKSON	256

July.

*Love, on your grave in the ground
Sweet flowers I planted are growing ;
Lilies and violets abound,
Pansies border it round,
And cowslips, all of my sowing.
A creeper is trying to cover
Your name with a kiss like a lover.*

*Dear, on your grave in my heart
Grow flowers you planted when living,
Memories that cannot depart,
Faith in life's holier part,
Love, all of your giving ;
And Hope, climbing higher, is surer
To reach you as Life grows purer.*

July
first.

IF ONLY.

IF only in my dreams I once might see
Thy face ! though thou shouldst stand
With cold unreaching hand,
Nor vex thy lips to break
The silence, with a word for my love's sake ;
Nor turn to mine thine eyes,
Serene with the long peace of paradise,
Yet henceforth life would be
Made sweet, not wholly bitter unto me.

If only I might know for verity,
That when the light is done
Of this world's sun,
And that unknown, long sealed
To sound and sight, is suddenly revealed,
That thine should be the first dear voice thereof,
And thy dear face the first — O Love, My Love !
Then coming death would be
Sweet, ah, most sweet, not bitter unto me !

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN.

July
Second.

DEEM not that they are blest alone
Whose days a peaceful tenor keep,
The God who loves our race has shown
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

The light of smiles shall fill again
The lids that overflow with tears,
And weary hours of woe and pain
Are promises of happier years.

Oh, there are days of sunny rest
For every dark and troubled night,
And grief may bide, an evening guest,
But joy shall come with early light.

And thou who o'er thy friend's low bier
Dost shed the bitter drops like rain,
Hope that a brighter, happier sphere
Will give him to thy arms again.

Nor let the good man's trust depart,
Though life its common gifts deny;
Though, with a pierced and bleeding heart,
And spurned of men, he goes to die.

For God hath marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear,
And Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all His children suffer here.

July
Thirb. THE LAST OF THE EARTH.

DEATH — is it death?
The shadow following still upon the sun,
The one same end of all things yet begun,
After the glory of life the sudden gloom,
After the strife the inexorable doom,
The frozen breath?

Nay, rather see
Where the new grave lies sodden in the rain,
How the bare earth quickens to growth again !
Waiting the wonder season's lavish dower
Young rootlets creep, a wealth of grass and flower
Erelong to be.

When death has passed
Into the land of silence and of cloud,
The leafless land, wherein no bird is loud,
Life lingers yet with song and blossom rife.
Lo ! step for step go ever death and Life —
But Life is last !

July
Fourth.

THE NEWLY WEDDED.

NOW the rite is duly done,
Now the word is spoken,
And the spell has made us one
Which may ne'er be broken ;
Rest we, Dearest, in our home,
Roam we o'er the heather :
We shall rest, and we shall roam,
Shall we not ? — together.

From this hour the summer rose
Sweeter breathes to charm us ;
From this hour the winter snows
Lighter fall to harm us :
Fair or foul — on land or sea —
Come the wind or weather,
Best and worst, whate'er they be,
We shall share — together.

Death, who friend from friend can part,
Brother rend from brother,
Shall but link us, heart and heart,
Closer to each other :
We will call his anger play,
Deem his dart a feather,
When we meet him on our way
Hand in hand — together.

July
Fifth.

QUESTIONS.

DEAR ones, who passed, with lingering breath,
 Out through the dark, mysterious portal —
 That gate to the Life which men call death —
 To join the company immortal,
 Have you naught to tell of that wondrous shore —
 That strange, new chapter of Life eternal?
 Are pain and sorrow known no more?
 Is sorrow quenched in bliss supernal?

Have you passed so far from this life below
 That all its memories are dead and buried?
 That you reck no more of its ebb and flow
 Than the wind the leaf that it chased and hurried?
 You loved us once in the days long gone;
 Has that love died in the new awaking?
 We do not forget, who journey alone,
 With tear-dimmed eyes and sad hearts aching.

Do you yearningly wonder how it fares
 With us, who life's long path are treading?
 Do you sometimes know when we breathe our prayers
 In grief to the Goodness all-pervading?
 Do you miss or long for us day by day
 As do we the faces and forms long vanished?
 Could you bear from us always apart to stay?
 Would Heaven be Heaven if we were banished?

Was it only a dream? In a voice so low
 That the silence around seemed scarcely broken,
 In the dear, loved accents of long ago,
 In fancy it seemed these words were spoken :
 "We who are dead can never die ;
 We still are near, and we love you ever ;
 For Love is divine — so holy a tie
 Not even the hand of death can sever !"



July
 Sixth.

WHEN THE BABY DIED.

WHEN the baby died,
 On every side
 White lilies and blue violets were strewn ;
 Unreasoning, the mother's heart made moan :
 "Who counted all these flowers which have grown
 Unhindered in their bloom?
 Was there not room,
 O earth, and God, couldst Thou not care
 For mine a little longer? Fare
 Thy way, O earth ! All life, all death
 For me ceased with my baby's breath ;
 All Heaven I forget or doubt.
 Within, without,
 Is idle chance, more pitiless than law."
 And that was all the mother saw.

When the Baby Died.

9

When the baby died,
On every side
Were strangers' voices, hard and harsh and loud.
The baby was not wrapped in any shroud :
The mother made no sound. Her head was bowed
That men's eyes might not see
Her misery ;
But in her bitter heart she said,
" Ah me ! 't is well that he is dead,
My boy for whom there was no food.
If there were God, and God were good,
All human hearts at least might keep
The right to weep
Their dead. There is no God, but cruel law."
And that was all the mother saw.

When the baby died,
On every side
Swift angels came in shining, singing bands,
And bore the little one with gentle hands
Into the sunshine of the spirit lands.
And Christ, the Shepherd, said,
" Let them be led
In gardens nearest to the earth.
One mother weepeth over birth,
Another weepeth over death ;
In vain all Heaven answereth.
Laughs from the little ones may reach
Their ears, and teach
Them what, so blind with tears, they never saw, —
That of all Life, all death, God's Love is law."

July
Seventh.

IT IS WELL.

YES; it is well! The evening shadows lengthen;
Home's golden gates shine on our ravished sight;
And though the tender ties we strove to strengthen
Break one by one, — at evening-time 't is light.

'T is well! The way was often dull and weary;
The spirit fainted oft beneath its load;
No sunshine came from skies all gray and dreary,
And yet our feet were bound to tread that road.

'T is well that not again our hearts shall shiver
Beneath old sorrows, once so hard to bear;
That not again beside death's darksome river
Shall we deplore the good, the loved, the fair.

No more with tears, wrought from deep, inner anguish,
Shall we bewail the dear hopes crushed and gone;
No more need we in doubt or fear to languish;
So far the day is past, the journey done!

As voyagers, by fierce winds beat and broken,
Come into port, beneath a calmer sky,
So we, still bearing on our brows the token
Of tempest past, draw to our haven nigh.

A sweet air cometh from the shore immortal,
Inviting homeward at the day's decline ;
Almost we see where from the open portal
Fair forms stand beckoning with their smiles divine.

'Tis well ! The earth with all her myriad voices
Has lost the power our senses to enthral ;
We hear, above the tumult and the noises,
Soft tones of music, like an angel's call.

'Tis well, O friends ! We would not turn, — retracing
The long, vain years, nor call our lost youth back ;
Gladly, with spirits braced, the future facing,
We leave behind the dusty, foot-worn track.



July
Eighth.

LOVE'S SACRIFICE.

GETHSEMANE

Denied our Lord all human sympathy,
And deepest grief
Is that we bear alone for others' sake,
Smiling the while, lest loving hearts should break
For our relief.

O hearts that faint
Beneath your burdens great, but make no 'plaint,
Lift up your eyes !
Somewhere beyond, the Life you give is found ;
Somewhere, we know, by God's own hand is crowned
Love's sacrifice.

OH, FEAR NOT THOU TO DIE.

July
Ninth.

OH, fear not thou to die —
 Far rather fear to live — for life
 Has thousand snares thy feet to try,
 By peril, pain, and strife.
 Brief is the work of death ;
 But life — the spirit shrinks to see
 How full, ere Heaven recalls the breath,
 The cup of woe may be.

Oh, fear not thou to die —
 No more to suffer or to sin —
 No snare without, thy faith to try —
 No traitor heart within ;
 But fear, oh, rather fear
 The gay, the light, the changeful scene, —
 The flattering smiles that greet thee here,
 From Heaven thy heart to wean.

Oh, fear not thou to die —
 To die, and be that blessed one
 Who in the bright and beauteous sky
 May feel this conflict done —
 May feel that nevermore
 The tear of grief, of shame, shall come,
 For thousand wanderings from the Power
 Who loved and called thee home.

July
Tenth.

GRANDMOTHER.

DEAR Grandmother, there was no brow more
beautiful than thine.

Thy loving spirit showed itself in every wrinkled line.
The softest word of thy sweet voice bade all our
troubles cease ;

The gentle look of thy meek eyes was full of faith
and peace.

Thou wast so patient, day by day, so far from drear
complaining,

We never knew when, in thy life, 't was stormy, dark,
or raining.

We never knew when thou wert sad, for on thy
radiant face

The features always wore a smile of calm and saintly
grace.

We saw no cloud, we found no shade, that told of
pain or fear ;

Thy noble heart kept to itself the bitter, secret tear.

And well we know that thou didst hide from us thy
grief and sorrow ;

That thou didst hush thy sighs lest they might cloud
our bright to-morrow.

O cherished One, we cannot feel that thou art far
away :

The night of darkness only falls to measure day from
day ;

And so the shade that hides thy smile, that was of
angel worth,

Is but the shadow measuring out the Heavens from
the earth.

God only takes to hold more dear the loved ones He
has given :

And thou art still our Grandmother, — our Grand-
mother in Heaven.



July
Eleventh.

THE CLOSET.

THERE is no room within thy house like this,
No privacy so pure and stainless, where the heart
In its deep inmost silence seeks the bliss
Which Heaven bestows but on the soul apart.
From curious eyes keep it inviolate,
Where thou the dainties of thy soul dost store ;
From listening ears that may around it wait,
Keep every word secure forevermore.
This is the true confessional ; where thou
May'st ever go in confidence to Him
To seek forgiveness, and renew each vow
That binds thy spirit to His faith supreme.
Enter ! for Love has made it sacred there !
Enter ! for thou shalt find this is the home of prayer !

IV 41

WITH US STILL.

ly
fth.

NOT lost, not dead, not gone, not even sleeping,
Though we have lain thee in the grave with
weeping ;
sharp despair our chastened hearts can fill,
For thou art with us still.

with us ! Memory's web is strong and bright
h joy which blessed, with love which knew no
blight,
se have the power yet our hearts to thrill,
For thou art with us still.

Still with us, but unvexed by any pain ;
No crushing care to weary thee again,
But by thy presence sweet, unseen yet near,
Our lonely hours to cheer.

Still with us, though no gentle touch we feel,
No word or sign thy nearness doth reveal.
The heart of Love, our home, holds many rooms,
But knows no dismal tombs.

Still with us at the wakening of the day,
Still with us in the twilight shadows gray ;
And since our tears thou would'st not wish to see,
We give but smiles to thee.

Still with us, in the sunshine of God's face ;
 With us the loving sharer of His grace ;
 Upholding thee, the same almighty arm
 Is shielding us from harm.

Still with us, — though the evening shadows fall
 Around us with the blackness of a pall ;
 After the shadow comes the radiant dawn
 When all earth's night is gone.

And in the land where we at last shall rest
 When we a little farther on have pressed,
 Beyond the reach of all which seek to sever,
 Thou shalt be with us still, — forever !



July **DEATH IS BUT SLEEP.**
Thirteenth.

WHEN He who giveth, takes again,
 We know 't is right.
 The hand that chastens will sustain,
 And have we faith, and Love, and trust,
 We feel He cannot be but just, —
 He will requite.

Fold the tiny hands. Close the eyes
 From earthly light.
 He asks of thee this sacrifice.
 Thy babe has gone, but comes again
 Forever with thee to remain,
 Where there 's no night.

Canst bear the joy? then bear the pain
 He sends to thee,
Forget not, friend, — thy loss, her gain ;
Thy cross, her crown ; thy tears, her smile ;
Let these thoughts cheer thee up the while,
 Nor saddened be.

Ah ! rested are the little feet
 That might have been
Aweary with the bitter-sweet
That falls to each in this rude life.
God's will preserved her from the strife
 To us unseen.

Death is but sleep. Her opened eyes
 Behold the day.
This life is night ; these fields, these skies
Are not the real nor yet the true,
To one to whom all things are new,
 In holy way.

Then sorrow not, but up and do,
 In Christ-like faith
Whate'er in life He asks of you, —
For those who early leave us here,
Though out of sight, are ever near
 Our earthly path.

July THE ANGEL OF DEATH.
Fourteenth.

WHY shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death,
Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

How many a tranquil soul has passed away,
Fled gladly from fierce pain and pleasures dim,
To the eternal splendor of the day ;
And many a troubled heart still calls for him.

Spirits too tender for the battle here
Have turned from life, its hopes, its fears, its charms ;
And children shuddering at a world so drear,
Have smiling passed away into his arms.

He whom thou fearest will, to ease its pain,
Lay his cold hand upon thy aching heart ;
Will soothe the terrors of thy troubled brain,
And bid the shadow of earth's grief depart.

He will give back what neither time nor might,
Nor passionate prayer nor longing hope restore,
(Dear as to long-blind eyes recovered sight,)
He will give back those who are gone before.

Oh, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see
Thy treasure wait thee in the far-off skies,
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.



July
Fifteenth.

THERE.

DO any hearts ache there, beyond the peaceful river?
Do fond souls wait, with longing in their eyes,
For those who come not, will not come, forever, —
For some wild hope whose dawn will never rise?

Do any love there still, beyond the silent river,
The ones they loved in vain, this side its flow?
Does the old pain make their heart-strings ache and
quiver? —
I shall go home, some day, go home and know.

The hill-tops are bright there, beyond the shining river,
And the long glad day, it never turns to night, —
They must be blest, indeed, to bear the light forever,
Grief longs for darkness to hide its tears from sight.

Are tears turned to smiling, beyond the blessed river,
And mortal pain and passion drownèd in its flow?
Then all we who sit on its hither bank and shiver,
Let us rejoice, — we shall go home and know.

July
Sixteenth.

TO THE END.

O FRIEND of mine !
Stanch friend of mine !

Hold fast my hand in yours and say,
The love outleaping from your eyes,
You have been friend to me alway,
God bless you, friend of mine !

O friend of mine !
Firm friend of mine !

We each life's bitterness have known,
And hand in hand we both have stood,
And now I leave you here alone ;
God bless you, friend of mine !

O friend of mine !
Strong friend of mine !

Your love has made my life seem fair ;
Life goes too swift for love like yours ;
Your arm upholds me in despair ;
God bless you, friend of mine !

O friend of mine !
True friend of mine !

My feeble breath is failing fast ;
Hold close my hands, bend down your face,
Good-bye ; yes, faithful to the last,
God bless you, friend of mine !

July THE SICK MAN'S DREAM.
Seventeenth.

AND there before me flashed a morning gleam
 (It was not like a dream),
A dazzle of light that overflowed the sky
 And filled the sea ; and I,
A city-toiler fallen in the strife
 That I could wage no more,
I seemed the wreck and remnant of a life
 The sea had cast ashore.

Oh but to lie upon those sun-kissed sands
 With idle, restful hands,
To feel the freshening wind, to hear the sea
 Whisper, and call to me,
Was as tho' Heaven had dawned on earth at last,
 Or I to Heaven were brought :
The city here, my life of all the past
 Dwindled to but a thought.

There in the streets, I thought, the dull day long
 The busy workers throng,
Whilst I . . . The waves broke nearer, and more near,
 And still I had no fear ;
I yearned to feel the cool, bright waters sweep
 Above me, hushed and high ;
For, when I gazed, I saw in all the deep
 Only another sky.

Then something stirred ; or was it you that spoke ?
 I started, and awoke,
 And lo ! my hands lay white and wasted yet
 On the white coverlet ;
 And here, about me, still this silent room,
 The shaded lamp, the red
 Quick fire-flame darting lightnings thro' the gloom—
 And you beside my bed.

As stars at dawn, the dreams that fill the dark
 Wane when we waken. . . . Hark !
 Is it a wind among the garden trees,
 That voice so like the sea's ?—
 Listen ! . . . I have not dreamed. Oh, restful bliss !
 The great sea calls me now. . . .
 These are its winds that cool my lips, and this
 Its spray upon my brow.



July
Eighteenth.

THE OTHER SIDE.

C LIMBING the mountain's shaggy crest,
 I wondered much what sight would greet
 My eager gaze whene'er my feet
 Upon the topmost height should rest.

The other side was all unknown ;
 But, as I slowly toiled along,
 Sweeter to me than any song
 My dream of visions to be shown.

Meanwhile the mountain shrubs distilled
Their sweetness all along my way,
And the delicious summer day
My heart with rapture overfilled.

At length the topmost height was gained ;
The other side was full in view ;
My dreams — not one of them was true,
But better far had I attained.

For far and wide on either hand
There stretched a valley broad and fair,
With greenness flashing everywhere, —
A pleasant, smiling, home-like land.

Who knows, I thought, but so 't will prove
Upon that mountain-top of death,
Where we shall draw diviner breath,
And see the long-lost friends we love.

It may not be as we have dreamed,
Not half so awful, strange, and grand ;
A quiet, peaceful, home-like land,
Better than e'er in vision gleamed.

Meanwhile along our upward way
What beauties lurk, what visions glow !
Whatever shall be, this we know
Is better than our lips can say.

July
Nineteenth.

BEFORE SLEEPING.

NOW is the dead of night, and I must sleep ;
But first, my soul, if thou dost aught recall
Wherein thou hast done ill, I bid thee weep,
And pray God's tender mercy on thee fall ;
Purge thyself clean of whatso bitter hate
Thou hast for them that wrong thee ; sink thy pride,
Nor deem thou standest in a higher state
Than those whom God thy happier chance denied.
Be all for Heaven ; think life draws near the close ;
Give to repentance thy last conscious breath ;
For more and more this mortal weakness grows
That pledges thee to take the form of death,
And sleep awhile. What if in dreams the door
Of life should shut, and thou return no more ?

July
Twentieth.

THE BROKEN TOY.

A BROKEN toy ! what memories cling
Around this half-forgotten thing ;
What baby laughter seems to rise,
Like old delightful melodies ;
What shouts of wordless, tuneful joy,
At sight of this poor broken toy !
Oh, tiny feet that would not rest !
Oh, dear head pillowed on my breast,
What would we give to hold again
The form we lost mid tears and pain !
Ah, child ! the empty cot is ours,
But thine the sunshine and the flowers.

What could we give thee shouldst thou come
To smile again upon thy home?
Such little pleasures as we know
In this, our twilight life below ;
Some fragments of earth's paltry joys,
A handful of its broken toys.

How calm thy lot, — forever blest ;
How exquisite thy happy rest !
How changeless, joyful, and serene,
Compared with what thy life had been
With us, — whose fleeting, clouded joys
Are at their best but broken toys !



July LIFE AND DEATH.
Twenty-First.

IF yonder sun had an eternal voice,
And from each star celestial numbers rung ;
If each sweet flower had a gentle tongue,
Mid sun and dew to breathe its music choice ;
If from the very ground melodious noise
Rose solemnly the hills and vales among,
And each fair tree with singing leaflets hung, —
The day and night in concord would rejoice.
So if the wondrous things of Life and death,
With voices grand might from their dumbness break,
And blending in one full triumphant breath,
Their own immortal revelation make ;
Then would we know how death, whose name we
wrong,
Must join with Life to make one perfect song.

EJACULATORY PRAYER.

July
~~Twenty-Second.~~

THERE is no grief on earth, however fell,
Within whose heart no spark of joy doth dwell.
Yet mine hath not even that ray of pleasure !
Who can it measure ?

To still keep silence when, in fiercest anguish,
The heart must unto death with longing languish ;
Against the bruised breast the hard rocks clasp-
And sharp thorns grasping !

In bonds to lie, incapable of movement,
No spot to lay the head for sleep's balm potent,
No drop of cordial to parched lips to proffer,
Yet battle offer !

So strive we onward to the grave's dark portal,
Until we speak our last words with lips mortal ;
Until the soul doth from the body sever,
Peace cometh never !

But in the boundless space beyond earth glowing
Lies the true happiness I'm sure of knowing !
A thousand suns with rays of joy are beaming
Beyond my dreaming !

IF I COULD KEEP HER SO.

July
Twenty-Third.

JUST a little baby, lying in my arms, —
Would that I could keep you, with your baby
 charms ;

Helpless, clinging fingers, downy, golden hair,
Where the sunshine lingers, caught from elsewhere ;
Blue eyes asking questions, lips that cannot speak,
Roly-poly shoulders, dimple in your cheek ;
Dainty little blossom in a world of woe,
Thus I fain would keep you, for I love you so.

Roguish little damsel, scarcely six years old, —
Feet that never weary, hair of deeper gold ;
Restless, busy fingers all the time at play,
Tongue that never ceases talking all the day ;
Blue eyes learning wonders of the world about,
Here you come to tell them, — what an eager shout ! —
Winsome little damsel, all the neighbors know ;
Thus I long to keep you, for I love you so.

Sober little schoolgirl, with your strap of books,
And such grave importance in your puzzled looks ;
Solving weary problems, poring over sums,
Yet with tooth for sponge-cake and for sugar-plums ;
Reading books of romance in your bed at night,
Waking up to study with the morning light ;
Anxious as to ribbons, deft to tie a bow,
Full of contradictions, — I would keep you so.

Sweet and thoughtful maiden, sitting by my side,
 All the world 's before you, and the world is wide ;
 Hearts are there for winning, hearts are there to
 break,

Has your own, shy maiden, just begun to wake?
 Is that rose of dawning glowing in your cheek
 Telling us in blushes what you will not speak?
 Shy and tender maiden, I would fain forego
 All the golden future, just to keep you so.

Ah ! the listening angels said that she was fair,
 Ripe for rare unfolding in the upper air ;
 Now the rose of dawning turns to lily white,
 And the close-shut eyelids veil the eyes from sight ;
 All the past I summon as I kiss her brow, —
 Babe, and child, and maiden, all are with me now.
 Though my heart is breaking, yet God's Love I
 know, —
 Safe among the angels, I would keep her so.



July
 Twenty-Fourth.

MIZPAH.

WE never used the word while thou and I
 Walked close together in life's working way ;
 There was no need for it when hand and eye
 Might meet, content and faithful, every day.

But now, with anguish from a stricken heart,
Mizpah ! I cry ; the Lord keep watch between
Thy Life and mine, that death hath riven apart ;
Thy Life beyond the awful veil, unseen,
And my poor broken being, which must glide
Through ways familiar to us both, till death
Shall, of a surety, lead me to thy side,
Beyond the chance and change of mortal breath.
Mizpah ! yea, Love, in all my bitter pain,
I trust God keepeth watch betwixt us twain.

The lips are dumb from which I used to hear
Strong words of counsel, tender words of praise ;
Poor I must go my way without the cheer
And sunshine of thy presence all my days.

But God keeps watch my ways and days upon,
On all I do, on all I bear for thee.
My work is left me, though my mate is gone ;
A solemn trust hath Love bequeathed to me.

I take the task thy languid hand laid down
That summer evening, for mine own away ;
And may the Giver of both cross and crown
Pronounce me faithful at our meeting day !
Mizpah ! the word gives comfort to my pain ;
I know God keepeth watch betwixt us twain.

July WHEN I REMEMBER.
 Twenty-Fifth.

WHEN I remember something which I had,
 But which is gone, and I must do without,
 I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,
 Even in cowslip time when hedges sprout ;
 It makes me sigh to think on it, — but yet
 My days will not be better days, should I forget.

When I remember something promised me,
 But which I never had, nor can have now,
 Because the promise we no more see
 In countries that accord with mortal vow ;
 When I remember this, I mourn, — but yet?



July REGRET.
 Twenty-Sixth.

OH, that word — Regret !
 There have been nights and morns when we
 have sighed,
 “ Let us alone, Regret ! we are content
 To throw thee all our past, so thou wilt sleep
 For aye.” But it is patient, and it wakes ;
 It hath not learned to cry itself to sleep,
 But plaineth on the bed that it is hard.
 We did amiss when we did wish it gone
 And over : sorrows humanize our race ;
 Tears are the showers that fertilize this world ;
 And memory of things precious keepeth warm
 The heart that once did hold them.

They are poor
That have lost nothing ; they are poorer far
Who, losing, have forgotten ; they most poor
Of all, who lose and wish they might forget.
For life is one, and in its warp and woof
There runs a thread of gold that glitters fair,
And sometimes in the pattern shows most sweet
Where there are sombre colors. It is true
That we have wept. But oh, this thread of gold,
We would not have it tarnish ; let us turn
Oft and look back upon the wondrous web,
And when it shineth sometimes we shall know
That memory *is* possession.

— ♦ —
THY PRAYER IS GRANTED.

July

~~Twenty-Seventh.~~

THY prayer is granted : thou hast joined the choir
Invisible, — the choir whose music makes
Life's discords grow to harmonies, and takes
Us unawares with sounds that are as fire
And light and melody in one. We tire
Of weary noon and night, of dawn that breaks
Only to bring again the cares, the aches,
The meannesses that drag us to the mire :
When lo ! amid life's din we catch thy clear
Large utterance from the lucid upper air,
Bidding us wipe away the miry stain,
And scale the stainless stars, and have no fear
Save the one dread of forfeiting our share
In the deep joy that follows noble pain.

A SPEECH OF SILENCE.

July

~~Twenty-Eighth.~~

THE solemn sea of silence lies between us ;
I know thou livest, and thou lovest me ;
And yet I wish some white ship would come sailing
Across the ocean, bearing word from thee.
The dead calm awes me with its awful stillness ;
No anxious doubts or fears disturb my breast ;
I only ask some little wave of language
To stir this vast infinitude of rest.
I am oppressed with this great sense of loving ;
So much I give, so much receive from thee ;
Like subtle incense, rising from a censer,
So floats the fragrance of thy love round me.
All speech is poor, and written words unmeaning ;
Yet such I ask, blown hither by some wind,
To give relief to this too perfect knowledge,
The silence so impresses on my mind.
How poor the love that needeth word or message,
To banish doubt or nourish tenderness ;
I ask them but to temper love's convictions
The silence all too fully doth express.
Too deep the language the spirit utters ;
Too vast the knowledge which my soul hath stirred.
Send some white ship across the sea of silence,
And interrupt its utterance with a word.

July
Twenty-Ninth. GOING TO SLEEP.

TWO tireless little feet all day have trotted
 Across the parlor floors ;
 Two tiny dimpled hands have slyly plotted
 Mischief behind the doors !
 Two magic crystal orbs with watch unceasing,
 Their glance on all have flung ;
 Two rose-bud lips, their merry chattering, teasing
 In bird-like notes have sung.
 Now, o'er those orbs the drowsy lids are closing,
 Bidding adieu to light ;
 And lips, white heads, and feet lie still, reposing, —
 Have whispered their " Good-night."
 O blessed hour ! when soft-winged sleep, descending,
 Gives its own sweet surcease
 To toil-worn mortals, — all their troubles ending
 In sweet, oblivious peace.
 For He who ever guides the sunlight's setting
 And gently veils the earth,
 That deep repose may bring, that self-forgetting, —
 Prelude to newer birth, —
 Will ever guard the tender infant's slumber,
 And send His angel bands
 The midnight watch and dawning hours to number
 With star-tipped wands.

July
Thirtieth. COLD AND QUIET.

COLD, My Dear, — cold and quiet.

In their cups on yonder lea,
Cowslips fold the brown bee's diet ;
So the moss enfoldeth thee.

“ Plant me, plant me, O Love, a lily flower —

Plant at my head, I pray you, a green tree ;
And when our children sleep,” she sighed, “ at the
dusk hour,
And when the lily blossoms, oh, come out to me.”

Lost, My Dear ? Lost ! nay, deepest

Love is that which loseth least ;
Through the night-time while thou sleepest,
Still I watch the shrouded East.

Near thee, near thee, My Wife that aye liveth,

“ Lost ” is no word for such a love as mine ;
Love from her past to me a present giveth,
And love itself doth comfort, making pain divine.

Rest, My Dear, rest. Fair showeth

That which was, and not in vain
Sacred have I kept, God knoweth,
Love's last words atween us twain.

“ Hold by our past, My only Love, My Lover ;

Fall not, but rise, O Love, by loss of me ! ”
Boughs from our garden, white with bloom hang over ;
Love, now the children slumber, I come out to thee.

IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

July
Thirty-First.

O DAYS of Summer and sunshine, of roses white
and red,
Is it nothing to you that he, My One Little Boy, is
dead?
Your daisies are bright as of old — the daisies he'll
gather no more —
And the scent of the woodbine and jasmine comes
in at the open door ;
But ah ! he returneth never, but forever there must lie
Under the green of the grass, under the blue of the
sky.

The Indian cress on the wall shoots daily higher and
higher,
And soon in the summer sun will shake out flowers of
fire.
"It is growing bigger than me," he would say were
he with us now,
With his dark and wistful eyes, and his broad and
open brow ;
But flowers will not stay for our weeping, and will
blossom though he lie
Under the green of the grass, under the blue of the
sky.

He pass'd while the Spring was bringing new life to
wood and wold,
Ere the snowdrop had come, or the crocus had lit its
lamp of gold ;
He pass'd into death without knowing the mother
that bore him, or me ;
We spoke — but in vain — he was travelling farther
than we could see.
O God ! I had rather now that I, not he, should lie
Under the green of the grass, under the blue of the
sky.

But what do you know of it all, and what can we
understand ?
And what would the universe be if you or I had it in
hand ?
Be still ! To our closets and weep, and think of the
days and the hours
We had in Our Darling's love — his love for us and
for ours —
And pray for a record as blameless when we sleep,
you and I,
Under the green of the grass, under the blue of the
sky.

August.

*The ways of death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of death are grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
She beckons forth, and strife and song have been.*

*A summer night descending, cool and green
And dark, on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of death are grave and sweet.*

*O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
And radiant faces look upon and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean. . . .
The ways of death are soothing and serene.*

August
First.

IN COMMON THINGS.

SEEK not afar for beauty. Lo ! it glows
In dew-wet grasses all about thy feet ;
In birds, in sunshine, childish faces sweet,
In stars, and mountain summits topped with snow.

Go not abroad for happiness. For see !
It is a flower that blossoms by thy door.
Bring Love and justice home ; and then no more
Thou'lt wonder in what dwelling joy may be.

Dream not of noble service elsewhere wrought :
The simple duty that awaits thy hand
Is God's voice uttering a divine command ;
Life's common deeds build all that saints have thought.

In wonder workings, or some bush aflame,
Men look for God, and fancy Him concealed.
But in earth's common things He stands revealed ;
While grass and flowers and stars spell out His name.

The paradise men seek, the city bright
That gleams beyond the stars for longing eyes,
Is only human goodness in the skies,
Earth's deeds, well done, glow into heavenly light.

August

MATER DOLOROSA.

Second.

BECAUSE of one small low-laid head all crowned
With golden hair,
For evermore all fair young brows to me
A halo wear ;
I kiss them reverently. Alas ! I know
The pain I bear.

Because of dear but close-shut holy eyes
Of heaven's own blue,
All little eyes do fill my own with tears,
Whate'er their hue ;
And motherly I gaze their innocent
Clear depths into.

Because of little pallid lips which once
My name did call,
No childish voice in vain appeal upon
My ears doth fall ;
I count it all my joy their joys to share
And sorrows small.

Because of little dimpled hands
Which folded lie,
All little hands henceforth to me do have
A pleading cry ;
I clasp them as they were small wandering birds
Lured home to fly.

Because of little death-cold feet, for earth's
 Rough roads unmeet,
 I'd journey leagues to save from sin or harm
 Such little feet,
 And count the lowliest service done for them
 So sacred — sweet !



August
 Third.

QUESTIONINGS.

WE sat together, each one vexed
 By contrary mood and differing text.
 "How near is Heaven, or is it far
 Beyond my ken, as yon bright star?"
 "'If I believe ;' but do you *know*
 That these sweet things you dream are so?"

It may be near or far away,
 Our homes are fashioning to-day,
 And beautiful beyond compare
 The gardens that are growing there ;
 And no more sea, but round us bent
 God's deep, calm, infinite content.

If God so wills, I do not know,
 And yet my heart would have it so :
 When dimming eyes and silent lips
 Shall close these earthly comradeships,
 I pray that I may wake in bliss,
 And find my mansion next to His.

August
Fourth.

SAUL OF GERONTIUS.

* * * * *

AM I alive or dead? I am not dead,
 But in the body still ; for I possess
 A sort of confidence which clings to me,
 That each particular organ holds its place
 As heretofore, combining with the rest
 Into one symmetry, that wraps me round,
 And makes me man ; and surely I could move,
 Did I but will it, every part of me.
 And yet I cannot to my sense bring home,
 By very trial, that I have the power.
 'Tis strange ; I cannot stir a hand or foot,
 I cannot make my fingers or my lips
 By mutual pressure witness each to each,
 Nor by the eyelid's instantaneous stroke
 Assure myself I have a body still.
 Nor do I know my very attitude,
 Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.
 So much I know, not knowing how I know,
 That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,
 Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
 Or I or it is rushing on the wings
 Of light or lightning on an onward course,
 And we e'en now are million miles apart ;
 Yet . . . is this peremptory severance

Wrought out in lengthening measurements of space,
Which grow and multiply by speed and time?
Or am I traversing infinity
By endless subdivision, hurrying back
From finite towards infinitesimal,
Thus dying out of the expansive world?

Another marvel: some one has me fast
Within his ample palm; 't is not a grasp
Such as they use on earth, but all around
Over the surface of my subtle being,
As though I were a sphere, and capable
To be accosted thus, a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing; yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones, —
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody!



August
Fifth.

SORROW PAST.

THE shadow has gone by;
A peace fills all the sky.
My days are warm with quiet, sunny life;
My nights are full of rest.
Thy Love is manifest;
I thank Thee Thou hast led me from the strife.

I know that toil and pain
Will come to me again ;
That many shadows on my life must fall.
I know by long years past
Such quiet cannot last ;
And yet I thank Thee it has come at all.

When darkness falls at length,
I shall have gathered strength
From these sweet days of pleasantness and calm ;
And with sincerest heart,
When sweetest lights depart,
I may, through all, lift up my voice in psalm.

Now, with no care or fear,
Because I feel Thee near,
Because my hands were not reached out in vain,
May I from out my calm
Reach humbly out some balm,
Some peace, some light, to others in their pain.

And when at last I sleep,
May others come and reap
The harvest planted here by these weak hands ;
A harvest white for Thee
I pray it then may be.
Show me thy field ; I wait for Thy commands.

NOS MORITURI TE SALUTAMUS.

August
Sixth.

NOT, Heavenly Father, that we ask or hope
An idle Heaven beyond the sea of death,
Do we, about to die, salute Thee thus
With our fast-failing breath.

For we have found the dearest joy of earth
In work for Thee and for our fellow-men ;
Dying, we would not lay the burden down ;
As now, so be it then.

Not that we claim reward for duty done,
Though ne'er so bravely, in this mortal strife,
Do we demand of Thee, O God, our God,
A never-ending Life.

For it has been reward enough for us
To do the duty for its own sweet sake.
We have our dues, but not the less our cry
For Life to come we make.

Over a few things we have faithful been :
Now over many do Thou give us rule ;
For work, more work ; for lessons learned, to be
For ever in Thy school.

Not that we want a better world than this,
Rather that this is so divinely good ;
And what is best in it doth ever taste
As 't were immortal food.

Not that we hope to reach some happy shore,
 Where storms shall never dim the summer sky,
 Where struggle, sorrow, pain, shall be no more,
 Seems it less hard to die.

We know too well the good of sorrow here ;
 What after-freshness lurks in every storm ;
 What strength and beauty, pain and struggle, bring
 In their forbidding form.

Thus, O our Father, we about to die
 Salute Thee, not in selfishness or fear ;
 And dare believe that there is more beyond
 Than we have dreamed of here.



YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOREVER.

August
 Seventh.

THEY err who tell us that the spirit unclothed,
 And from its mortal tabernacle loosed,
 Has neither lineament of countenance,
 Nor limit of ethereal mould, nor form
 Of spiritual substance. The Eternal Word,
 Before He hung upon the Virgin's breasts,
 Was wont to manifest Himself to men,
 In visible similitude defined :
 And, when on Calvary He gave up the ghost,
 In that emancipated Spirit went forth,
 And preach'd glad tidings to the souls below.
 The angels are but spirits, a flame of fire,

And subtle as the viewless winds of heaven ;
 Yet are they each to the other visible,
 And beautiful with those original forms
 That crowned the morn of their nativity.
 Each has his several beauty. It is true
 The changes that diversify their state,
 Wrought with the speed of wishes at their will
 And pleasure who are pleased as pleases God,
 Are many as are the leaves and bloom and fruit
 That shed new lustre on the orange groves
 And vineyards of the South : but still remains
 Their angel ideality the same,
 As we confuse not orange-trees and vines.
 And so the spirit inbreathed in human flesh,
 By death divested of its mortal robes,
 Retains its individual character,
 Ay, and the very mould of its sojourn
 Within this earthly tabernacle. Face
 Answers to face, and limb to limb ; nor lacks
 The saint immediate investiture
 With saintly apparel. Only then the mind
 Which struggles here beneath this fleshy veil,
 As the pure fire in a half-polished gem —
 Ruby or amethyst or diamond —
 Imprisoned, when the veil is rent in twain,
 Beams as with solar radiance forth, and sheds
 Its glow o'er every motion, every look :
 That which is born of spirit is spirit, and seems
 All ear, all eye, all feeling, and all heart ; —
 A crystal shrine of Life.

August
Eighth.

THE MAN SURVIVES.

* * * * *

HOW strange is death to Life, and yet how sure
The law which dooms each living thing to die !
Whate'er is outward cannot long endure,
And all that lasts eludes the subtlest eye.

Because the eye is only made to spell
The grosser garb and falling husk of things,
The vital strength and streams that inlier dwell,
Our faith divines amid their secret springs.

The stars will sink as fade the lamps of earth,
The earth be lost as vapor seen no more,
And all around that seems of oldest birth
Abides one destined day — and all is o'er.

* * * * *

The spirit leaves the body's wondrous frame,
That frame itself a world of strength and skill ;
The nobler inmate new abodes will claim,
In every change to Thee aspiring still.

Although from darkness born, to darkness fled,
We know that light beyond surrounds the whole ;
The man survives, though the weird corpse be dead,
And He who dooms the flesh redeems the soul.

August
Ninth.

LIFE AND DEATH.

DO not think of her with death.
What is Life? This fluttering breath
Here a moment, gone for aye,
Lost 'twixt now and yesterday?
Life, ah fool ! 't is all divine.
Not this gasp of yours or mine
Prisoned in a mortal form,
Racked with fever, spent with storm.
'T is a quenchless flame from Him
Who created seraphim ;
Bade His creature earth renew,
Ever to its cycle true,
Leaf and blossom from their grave,
Though the Winter howl and rave.
What if buds be iron-bound
Deep within the barren ground ?
There the life doth lie asleep
Till the Spring rains o'er it weep.
Then it rises ; flood nor fire,
Fiendish wrath, nor man's desire,
That free spark extinguisheth,
Nor the dark that men call death.
So she liveth, and the prison
Whence her glad soul hath arisen,
Lieth in the dust to-day,
Since she would no longer stay.

VOL. II. — 4.

Do it honor, for it held her ;
Through its dimness we beheld her ;
Underneath its feebleness,
Guessing some sublime redress,
Yet to free that heavenly shape,
So to Heaven it might escape.
In the pure gleam of her eye,
In her laugh's frank verity,
On the tablet broad and fair
'Neath the tendrils of her hair,
Life immortal set its seal.
Dust no more could dare reveal,
Lest its strong and glorious shining
Filled us with divine repining,
Made us mad to quit the strife
And the longing men call life.
Lovely soul ! Few days divide
Us thy kindred, from thy side.
Lovely clay ! What death can ever
Tender thoughts from thee dis sever ?
Rest, till God's prevailing Spring
From His holiest garden bring,
With the violet and the rose,
Thy new fashion, and disclose,
In the resurrection hour,
All the hidings of His power.
Then those eyes shall shine again,
Free from shade of grief or pain ;
And the triumph of that brow

Tell us Life is victor now.
Life that rules, and reigns, and is
God and God's eternities.
Speed the day, and haste the night !
Death is darkness. Life is light.



August
Tenth.

LOST AND FOUND.

DEAR Lord ! Lost in Thee,
Escaped from sin, without, within,
My soul at rest, loving the best,
Lost in Thee !

Dear Lord ! Lost in Thee,
Loving the true, all things new,
Self-love defied, nothing to hide,
Lost in Thee !

Dear Lord ! Lost in Thee,
Thou art the way, by night, by day ;
So on I go, and fear not, though—
Lost in Thee !

Dear Lord ! Thou art found,
The City near, Thy voice I hear,
Thy hand in mine, Thy name the sign ;
Lost *and* found !

August
Eleventh.

WHAT DYING IS.

TO leave the turmoil and the careful tumult,
And wander vague'y to a pleasant region
Where green fields glow with sheen of summer sunset,
And narrow farther to a sylvan vista
Whence issue sounds to soothe the spirit's trouble ;
To hear the laugh and gurgle of low waters,
And young birds singing with diviner music,
And young birds carolling with lovelier music,
And evening winds that walk with fainter footfall
Unto the white clouds and the blue sky-depths ;
To rest a little some green willow under,
Whose branches whisper in the shadow-garden,
And hold the hand which hath the tenderest pressure,
And touch sweet lips just as thine eyes are closing :
This is that failing ere the sunset's fading,
This is that dying ere the morn immortal.
To see blue-hooded violets reposing
Among the grasses twining to caress thee
And kiss thy cheek, as if thou wert a sister,
And warm thee with their breath of heavenly odor,
As if thou wert to them indeed a sister ;
To find some quiet in the shadow-garden :
This is that evening of thy dreamless sleeping,
This is that slumber ere the Life immortal.
A gentle waking to a newer beauty,

A gradual unfolding to the soul-life,
 As 't were a rose's chrysalid transported
 Into the blooming valley of that Eden ;
 A slow unfolding of an early blossom ;
 A little kneeling at the sapphire portals,
 And consciousness of all surcease of heartache,
 Tumultuous tremor as the soul receiveth
 The grander splendor of the spherul chorus,
 That joy which "passeth human understanding" :
 This is that coming of another morning,
 This is that morning of the Life immortal !



WHAT MY FRIEND SAID TO ME.

August

Twelfth.

TROUBLE? Dear Friend, I know her not. God
 sent

His angel, Sorrow, on my heart to lay
 Her hand in benediction, and to say,
 "Restore, O Child, that which thy Father lent,
 For He doth now recall it," long ago.

His blessed angel, Sorrow ! She has walked
 For years beside me, and we two have talked
 As chosen friends together. Thus I know
 Trouble and Sorrow are not near of kin

Trouble distrusteth God, and ever wears
 Upon her brow the seal of many cares
 But Sorrow oft has deepest peace within.

She sits with patience in perpetual calm
 Waiting till Heaven shall send the healing balm.

August
Thirteenth.

CREED.

I BELIEVE if I were dead,
And you should kiss my eyelids when I lie
Cold, dead, and dumb to all the world contains,
The folded orbs would open at thy breath,
And, from its exile in the isles of death,
Life would come gladly back along my veins.

I believe if I were dead,
And you upon my lifeless heart should tread —
Not knowing what the poor clod chanced to be —
It suddenly would pulse beneath the touch
Of him it ever loved in life so much,
And throb again, warm, tender, true to thee.

I believe if in my grave,
Hidden in woody depths by all the waves,
Your eyes should drop some warm tears of regret,
From every salty seed of your dear grief
Some fair, sweet blossom would leap into leaf,
To prove death could not make my love forget.

I believe if I should fade
Into the mystic realms where light is made,
And you should long once more my face to see,
I would come forth upon the hills of night
And gather stars like fagots, till thy sight,
Led by the beacon blaze, fell full on me.

I believe my love for thee
 (Strong as my life) so nobly placed to be,
 It could as soon expect to see the sun
 Fall like a dead king from his heights sublime,
 His glory stricken from the throne of time,
 As thee, unworth the worship thou hast won.

I believe Love, pure and true,
 Is to the soul a sweet, immortal dew
 That gems life's petals in the hour of dusk,
 The waiting angels see and recognize
 The rich crown jewel Love of paradise,
 When life falls from us like a withered husk.



August
 Fourteenth.

PRESENCES.

TO what dark chambers of the heart or brain
 Do all our welling thoughts at times retreat?
 One presence seals my fountains, and in vain
 The rock of thought I beat.

Some other comes, and then, though he be dumb,
 My seals are broken and my fountains leap;
 And mind, that felt so shallow, has become
 A yet unfathom'd deep.

I may not read the old astrologies,
 Nor tell how moon-touch'd seas should ebb and flow,
 Or mind should be more tidal than the seas —
 But that it is, I know.

August
Fifteenth,

ONCE IN A WHILE.

IT is easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows by like a song,
But the man worth while is the one who will smile
When everything goes wrong.
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth
Is the smile that shines through tears.

It is easy enough to be prudent
When nothing tempts you to stray,
When without or within no voice of sin
Is luring your soul away.
But it's only a negative virtue
Until it is tried by fire,
And the life that is worth the honor of earth
Is the one that resists desire.

By the cynic, the sad, the fallen,
Who had no strength for the strife,
The world's highway is cumbered to-day, —
They make up the item of life.
But the virtue that conquers passion,
And the sound that hides in a smile, —
It is these that are worth the homage of earth,
For we find them but once in a while.

August
Sixteenth.

DEATH UNTO LIFE.

DEATH unto Life — Had that death been but
mine,
Not hers, with all my faculties unblown,
Unripened, touching there true anodyne
For imperfection, I had passed alone
Out of this twilight world of love and moan,
Content if only her dear hand had pressed
Mine, had her sweet tears shriven me, her tone
Of benediction calmed me on my quest,
And I had ceased to breathe only upon her breast.

Ay, but to live, where love itself was warm ;
To breathe, to dream, where love itself lay dead ;
To wake and fold within a hollow arm
Only chill memories ; to softly tread,
Trembling as in a world untenanted ;
To listen and to hear nought but the knell
Of dear love's daily parting ; to be wed
Body and soul to one live pain : to dwell
Familiar with death's face alone — how were that well ?

* * * * *

Dear Love, dead Wife, or if there be a name
Sweeter than these, more sacred, though my tongue,

Poor silent heretic, felt a quick flame
Of protestation leap against the wrong,
Done by thy doubting love to mine less strong,
And lightly would renounce, were I their lord,
The whole world's legacy and hope of song,
And what is most immortal, for one word
Fresh from thy lips to chime with my life's tuneless
chord.

* * * * *

Be to me sanctuary and song ! Be mine,
O Living Love, that my love may not miss
Full consummation, as the Florentine
Austere grew perfect for his Beatrice !
Beckon me to thee ! By that last cold kiss
Of consecration hold me, pure as she,
But warm with magic of remembered bliss !
The Love that was keep thou, and quicken me,
For the true power and stature of the Love to be !

Compass me with clear hope and memory ! Touch
To pure effectual passion all my sense,
Sublimed, transfigured to an utterance such
As listens unto Love in audience
Of death ! And if high reason, reverence,
Faith, freedom, Love speak at my spirit's birth
In music grave, wafted I know not whence,
O Love, dead, living, clothe it in my dearth
Or fulness with thyself and make it something worth !

August A RHYMED LESSON.
Seventeenth.

BETWEEN two breaths what crowded mysteries
lie, —

The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh !
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came.

But whence and why, our trembling souls inquire,
Caught these dim visions their awakening fire ?
Oh, who forgets when first the piercing thought
Through childhood's musings found its way unsought ?
I am ; — I live. The mystery and the fear
When the dread question, "What has brought me
here?"

Burst through life's twilight, as before the sun
Roll the deep thunders of the morning gun !

Are angel faces, silent and serene,
Bent on the conflicts of this little scene,
Whose dream-like efforts, whose unreal strife,
Are but the preludes to a larger Life ?

August
Eighteenth.

PEACE.

PEACE! What do tears avail?
She lies all dumb and pale,
And from her eye
The spirit of lovely life is fading
And she must die!
Why looks the lover wroth? the friend upbraiding?
Reply, reply!

Hath she not dwelt too long
'Midst pain, and grief, and wrong?
Then, why not die?
Why suffer again her doom of sorrow,
And hopeless lie?
Why nurse the trembling dream until to-morrow?
Reply, reply!

Death! Take her to thine arms,
In all her stainless charms,
And with her fly
To heavenly haunts, where, clad in brightness,
The angels lie.
Wilt bear her there, O Death, in all her whiteness.
Reply, reply!

August
Nineteenth.

MY BOY.

I HAD a little bird once,
But he has flown away ;
I had a little Boy once,
But, ah ! he did not stay.

What do they up in Heaven,
That bird and Boy should fly,
And leave my home so empty
To seek the far-off sky ?

What do they up in Heaven ? —
Perchance the angels sing,
And, when they heard that music,
My bird and Boy took wing.

The heavenly flowers bloom always,
The skies are always bright,
And all the little children
Play there from morn till night.

But do they never weary,
And long to go to rest,
Like little human children
Upon a mother's breast ?

My home and arms are empty,
My longing heart is sore,
Since they who sought the Summer
Come back to me no more.

How softly falls the twilight, —
The sunset fires are out :
A wind that comes from Heaven
Blows slowly round about.

I close my eyes and listen,
And presently I hear
A small voice through the darkness
Sigh, " Mother — I am near.

" Come, take me in, Dear Mother,
And rock me as of old :
I used to be so happy
Within your tender hold !

" There sorrow cannot find me,
And pain shall pass me by, —
When you enfold who love me,
What danger can come nigh ?

" So safe I was in Heaven,
So bright the shining days !
But, from afar, your weeping
Disturbed the hymns of praise.

" Till the dear Lord and gentle
Sent me to soothe your pain ;
And if you fain would keep me,
He bids me to remain."

I kissed his tender eyelids,
 I laid him on my heart ;
 And yet, when came the dawning,
 I prayed him to depart.

I feared the unknown future,
 I feared the paths untried, —
 How dared I keep My Darling
 When Heaven was opened wide ?

But, ah, my heart is lonely
 Since Boy and bird have fled, —
 I hear the silence only,
 And wish that I were dead.



THE PONTE DI PARADISO.

August
 Twentieth.

OF all the mysteries wherethrough we move,
 This is the most mysterious, — that a face,
 Seen peradventure in some distant place,
 Whither we can return no more to prove
 The world-old sanctities of human love,
 Shall haunt our waking thoughts, and gathering grace
 Incorporate itself with every phase
 Whereby the soul aspires to God above.
 Thus are we wedded through that face to her
 Or him who bears it; nay, one fleeting glance,
 Fraught with a tale too deep for utterance,
 Even as a pebble cast into the sea
 Will on the deep waves of our spirit stir
 Ripples that run through all eternity.

August
Twenty-First.

NOT ALONE.

I KNOW not whether in some distant, unknown
sphere

A shape will answer to the name I called him here ;
Or eyes in the eternal years will seek mine own,
And read in them the thoughts I share with him
alone.

But this I know, beside, within me, heart of my heart,
A conscious presence seems to dwell and take a part
In all the trouble or the gladness of my days,
And journeys with me through the dark or sunny
ways.

Again I live with him through all the bygone years ;
Over and over laugh, or drop the warm, soft tears ;
Again, there is no sting in any griefs I bear —
How can there, can there be, when there is one to
care?

Oh, like the unseen life pulsing in plant and tree
Are these remembrances — yet pleasant still — to me ;
And in the silence, as I hear his step, his tone,
I say, " Not dead and I alone ; no, not alone."

If, when my dust within the grave beside his lies,
A soul — this living self — goes searching through the
skies

And finds him not, — the very same, the voice, the
face, —

It will cry out, and turn and say, "O darkened place,

Below the fallen leaves to thee let me return,
And with him there forever lie in nature's urn,
Or in its crucible transformed together be !
This only do I ask of immortality."



August PLIGHTED FAITH.
Twenty-Second.

FAREWELL, farewell to thee, Belovèd One !
Relentless pressure of necessity,
The claims that are and those that are to be,
Drive me apace ; but oh, My Love ! My Heart !
I'll send thee kisses wheresoe'er thou art.

No kiss ? no clinging pressure of the hand,
Nor whispered word, caress, nor tender moan ?
Has parting's sorrow turned thy heart to stone ?
I dread the absence, lest my thoughts shall be
More with My Darling than her thought with me.

I touched her hand, and felt that it was cold ;
And yet her cheek was warm, her lips were red,
Her looks were eloquent ; few words she said :
I gazed within the bright and restless eyes,
And read her answer with a sad surprise :

VOL. II. — 5.

"I love, I love thee tenderly ; and yet,
Hope not ! Afar, in realms beyond those bars
Of moonlit silver set with gleaming stars,
Away beyond earth's fairest, farthest shore
I soon must journey, to return no more,

"Unto a silent dwelling-place afar.
And dost thou fear 't will be that I shall change
When exiled to those valleys new and strange —
The land which Death, the miser, hurries toward,
To hide life's stolen treasure he doth hoard?

"Oh, rather fear thou for thyself than me.
Oh, rather fear that thou mayst change instead,
Nor doubt the fealty of the changeless dead !
'T is well for them their ears are cold as stone,
That they may never hear life's changeful tone.

"'T were wise to fear eternal troth with one
So surely faithful through eternity ;
And if thou fain wouldst love more flippantly —
An hour for kisses and a day for sighs —
Return this honest answer in thine eyes."

No word I spoke, but kissed My Love adieu,
She hath my soul beside her in the grave ;
And though across high mount and tossing wave
My lone life leads me, I am comforted,
Faith being plighted with the faithful dead.

A SONG OF THE DAY TO THE NIGHT.

August

Twenty-Third.

FROM dawn to dusk, and from dusk to dawn,
We two are sundered always, Sweet,
A few stars shake o'er the rocky lawn
And the cold sea-shore when we meet,
The twilight comes with thy shadowy feet.

We are not day and night, My Fair,
But one. It is an hour of hours,
And thoughts that are not elsewhere
Are thought here 'mid the blown sea-flowers,
This meeting and this dusk of ours.

Delight has taken pain to her heart,
And there is dusk and stars for these.
Oh, linger, linger ! They would not part ;
And the wild wind comes from over-seas
With a new song to the olive trees.

And when we meet by the sounding pine,
Sleep draws near to his dreamless brother ;
And when thy sweet eyes answer mine,
Peace nestles close to her mournful mother,
And hope and weariness kiss each other.

August
Twenty-Fourth.

AT EVENTIDE.

* * * * *

HUSH, human soul, that liest at His feet !
 We too are His, and we too are as thou.
 The meaning and the end we know not now
 Of storms so fierce and calms that are so fleet.
 But He — He knoweth ! To His will we bow,
 And know Him God from hours like these, when meet
 Maker and made : where we are sure His brow
 Bended above us maketh all things sweet !

We are upon the shadow side of God,
 And of the gloom we say, "It is not He !"
 And we forget that, once the journey trod,
 We shall have reached the fuller light, and be
 Close to His breast, that now must only know
 He smileth somewhere, by the after-glow.



August
Twenty-Fifth.

THREE FRIENDS.

HOW seldom, Friend ! a good great man inherits
 Honor or wealth, with all his worth and pains !
 It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
 If any man obtain that which he merits,
 Or any merit that which he obtains.

For shame, Dear Friend! renounce this canting strain!

What wouldst thou have a good great man obtain?

Place — titles — salary — a gilded chain —

Or throne of corses which his sword hath slain? —

Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends!

Hath he not always treasures, always friends,

The good great man? — three treasures, Love and light,

And calm thoughts, regular as infant's breath; —

And three firm friends, more sure than day and night —

Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death.



FROM THE INVISIBLE.

August

Twenty-Sixth.

METHOUGHT I walked along a pleasant way,

Sunlight and shadow flecking leaf and sod,

And, hand in my hand, one beside me trod,

Her fair face adding brightness to the day.

Sudden we came upon a hidden door,

And she that walked beside me passed within,

Nor did return. But, where she late had been,

There came a voice that clamored, "Nevermore!"

That voice I knew; but straightway, seemingly,

From the shut door a gentle echo rung,

And, "Evermore!" still "Evermore!" it sung,

And ever softer and more dreamingly.

God of the living! from within the door —

No echo — came that blest word, "Evermore"?

August LINKS WITH HEAVEN.
Twenty-Seventh.

OUR God in Heaven, from that holy place,
To each of us an angel guide has given ;
But mothers of dead children have more grace,—
For they give angels to their God and Heaven.

How can a mother's heart feel cold and weary,
Knowing her dearer self safe, happy, warm?
How can she feel her road too dark and dreary,
Who knows her treasure sheltered from the storm.

How can she sin? Our hearts may be unheeding,
Our God forgot, our holy saints defied ;
But can a mother hear her dead child pleading,
And thrust those little angel hands aside?

Those little hands stretched down to draw her ever
Nearer to God by mother-love : — we all
Are blind and weak, yet surely she can never,
With such a stake in Heaven, fail or fall.

She knows that when the mighty angels raise
Chorus in Heaven, one little silver tone
Is hers forever, that one little praise,
One little happy voice, is all her own.

We may not see her sacred crown of honor,
But all the angels flitting to and fro
Pause smiling as they pass, — they look upon her
As mother of an angel whom they know.

* * * * *

Ah, saints in Heaven may pray with earnest will
 And pity for their weak and erring brothers ;
 Yet there is prayer in Heaven more tender still, —
 The little children pleading for their mothers.

—◆—

August
 Twenty-Eighth.

BAGLEY WOOD.

THE night is full of stars, full of magnificence ;
 Nightingales hold the wood, and fragrance loads
 the dark.

Behold, where fires august, what lights eternal ! Hark,
 What passionate music poured in passionate love's
 defence !

Breathe but the wafting wind's nocturnal frankincense !
 Only to feel this night's great heart, only to mark
 The splendors and the glooms, brings back the patri-
 arch

Who on Chaldean wastes found God through reverence.

Could we but live at will upon this perfect height,
 Could we but always keep the passion of this peace,
 Could we but face unshamed the look of this pure
 light,

Could we but win earth's heart, and give desire
 release :

Then were we all divine, and then were ours by right
 These stars, these nightingales, these scents ; then
 shame would cease.

August LOOKING WITHIN.
 Twenty-Ninth.

YE who in spirit are not yet awake,
 Dream while your night remains ; for, soon or late,
 The morn breaks sleep, and then farewell dream
 things, —

The satisfaction of a plenteous board,
 The joy of wine-cups, and the light exchange
 Of surface friendships, rumors, and vague thoughts ;
 Which vanish till again, in after time,
 With a diviner meaning they come back,
 The one sole want dawns on the awaken'd soul, —
 The want for God in all and all in God, —
 This utter vagueness to the soul that sleeps ;
 But oh, how truly all in all, he knows
 Who once has seen the Eternal. Life's unrest
 Is his thereafter, till he grows to God ;
 But that unrest the token of his growth.
 Thereafter I argue not against my grief,
 Which, being Heaven-sent, leads back to Heaven.

* * * * * * *

God lights both stars and souls ; their glory is
 Their measure of His being. Who would shine
 In His full light must tarry like the stars
 And bide God's time — not in hibernal coil,
 But with a watchful soul laid bare to Heaven,
 And in a ceaseless prayer, drinking in
 The light that movés him onward to his rise.

No one, however dim, is wholly dark ;
 For Life and darkness cannot be in one.
 But whoso, charmèd with another's blaze,
 Would also be of that peculiar hue,
 Draws in a borrowed light that dwarfs his own.
 He is the garner of another's wealth,
 To be repaid with interest, begging him.

* * * * *

There is no heart
 That is not penetrated with that Life :
 Our Heaven is as the fulness of our share ;
 And he of scrimpèd measure cannot see
 The bliss of him whose full cup overflows.
 That which he has he takes and never doubts,
 But calls him mystic who has more than that,
 Him purblind who has less. There comes to all
 A deep sense of the true — itself its proof :
 Doubt has no wedge-room when the inflow comes :
 It carries its own warrant like plain sight,
 And he that sees believes. Therefore I rest
 In this blue deep, nor cast one wistful look
 Back to the shallows of a doubtful shore, —
 Day after day waves up the beach of time,
 With ceaseless chafe and melancholy note
 To him that is time's slave ; but to the ear
 That lays its hearing in the eternal sea,
 Comes not the fretted murmur of the days.

* * * * *

August
Thirtieth.

LATER LIFE.

IN life our absent friend is far away :
But death may bring our friend exceeding near,
Show him familiar faces long so dear
And lead him back in reach of words we say.
He only cannot utter yea or nay
In voice accustomed to our ear ;
He only cannot make his face appear
And turn the sun back on our shadowed day.
The dead may be around us, dear and dead ;
The unforgotten dearest dead may be
Watching us with unslumbering eyes and heart
Brimful of words which cannot yet be said,
Brimful of knowledge they may not impart,
Brimful of Love for you and Love for me.

August
Thirty-First.

THE OTHER ROOM.

THIS pleasant room, you say, holds all I need ;
Here are my books, my plants, my pictures ;
friends
Are round my hearth. Before my eyes recede,
Through the broad casement, river, hill, and mead ;
And, better still, at evening there ascends
Twilight's one star, made to console the gloom.
There's the door where one enters ; here, the fire ;
What more could mortal ask, or heart desire ?
And there, the portal of the other room.

The life I lead is fair, yet here and there
 Its very sweetness wakes a secret pain
 For some remembered friends who unaware
 Stole through that door, and left this vacant chair,
 That book unread, unsung that well-known strain.
 The door is closed upon their still retreat.
 I call, I listen, but have never known
 The far-off whisper of an answering tone,
 Nor any sound of their returning feet.

Beyond that door, how dream I that they fare,
 What life for them the life left here foresees?
 Whether through other windows they may share
 My view of hill and stream, and everywhere
 Set round them books and pictures like to these,
 Sing songs like mine, and tend their rose in bloom,—
 Whether for them as well, when day is done,
 If there be any setting of their sun,
 My one star charms the twilight of their room.

Surely with purer hearts and clearer eyes
 Linked with the old life, but with wider aims,
 Fuller achievement — the old joys they prize
 For joy's sole purpose — that the life should rise
 Beyond the touch of any earthly shames.
 All wisdom there translated into deeds,
 All beauty there traced further to its source,
 My life in theirs pursues its intercourse,
 And theirs in mine still answers to my needs.

When I have finished here my days' routine,
For me that door shall open. May I stand
Not trembling, as the larger light serene,
With its fresh splendors seen and unforeseen,
Strikes me upon that threshold. May my hand
Find near a hand that held it in the gloom,
A voice that speaks in a remembered tone,
So leave this humble parlor of my own
For the broad peace of that withdrawing room.

September.

*Ah! life was sweet and deep, when she was here;
The woods and flowers spoke to me in ways
Unknown till then. My feet were in a maze
Before she came to me; and year by year
I walked this world alone, nor knew one joy
Compared with that which now is daily mine.
O God, I thank Thee for this gift of Thine,
Tender and true and pure, without alloy;
May I observe in every act of life
A conscience clear and void of all deceit!
May I within, without, in joy, in strife,
Be true to Thee, to her — that when we meet
Again and touch, and her eyes look in mine —
I then shall know I stand before my shrine!*

September
First.

MY MOTHER.

SO early lost, I cannot tell the lift
Of mother-arms ! A toy or two, her gift ;
A small white gown, her needle in its seam ;
And, dim as is a dream within a dream,
A little figure at a shadow's feet,
Or walking hand in hand upon the street —
A gentle shadow with an unseen face, —
No smile, no tone, no foot-fall mine for trace :
That is my unknown Mother !

Yet I know

The inmost currents of my being flow
From her high springs ; the faiths that in me rise
Have once made happy lights within her eyes ;
The gardens of my heart are seeded thick
With border-blooms that first in hers were quick ;
My very thought of God is her bequest,
Sealed mine before I lay upon her breast !

O Mother, could an earthly smile suffice,
And these not serve me well to recognize ?
Inwrought and deathless tokens pledge us joy
What day My Mother meets her grateful Boy !

September A SONG AT TWILIGHT.
Second.

LAY your hand, Sweet Wife, in mine ;
 Half divine
Was the love of long ago.
Dawn's bright hues no longer glow,
 And we watch, with fading sight,
 Day turn night.

Sitting here at twilight's fall,
 I recall
All our days of changing weather ;
How we met black care together, —
 Fought him till he turned to fly,
 You and I.

And the hours of glad content
 We have spent !
Perfect Love and perfect Life,
We have run their round, Sweet Wife ;
 But of all those hours so blest,
 This is best.

For at first, ah, well we knew
 We were two ;
Loving, striving still to mingle,
Yet how oft our wills were single ;
 Now our lives are almost done,
 We are one !

September THE LAST MUSIC.

Third.

CALMLY, breathe calmly all your music, maids !

Breathe a calm music over My dead Queen.

All your lives long, you have not heard nor seen,

Fairer than she, whose hair in sombre braids

With beauty overshades

Her brow, broad and serene.

Surely she hath lain so an hundred years ;

Peace is upon her, old as the world's heart.

Breathe gently, music ! Music done, depart ;

And leave me in her presence to my tears,

With music in mine ears ;

For sorrow hath its art.

Music, more music, sad and slow ! she lies

Dead ; and more beautiful than early morn.

Discrowned am I, and of her looks forlorn :

Alone vain memories immortalize

The way of her soft eyes,

Her musical voice low-borne.

The balm of gracious death now laps her round,

As once life gave her grace beyond her peers.

Strange ! that I loved this lady of the spheres,

To sleep by her at last in common ground,

When kindly sleep hath bound

Mine eyes, and sealed mine ears.

VOL. II. — 6.

Maidens ! make a low music : merely make
 Silence a melody, no more. This day,
 She travels down a pale and lonely way :
 Now, for a gentle comfort, let her take
 Such music, for her sake,
 As mourning love can play.

Holy My Queen lies in the arms of death :
 Music moves over her still face, and I
 Lean breathing Love over her. She will lie
 In earth thus calmly, under the wind's breath,
 The twilight wind, that saith,
 " Rest ! worthy found, to die."



September I 'VE BEEN THINKING.
 Fourth.

I 'VE been thinking of home, of " My Father's house,"
 Where the many mansions be,
 Of the city whose streets are paved with gold,
 Of its jasper walls so fair to behold,
 Which the righteous alone shall see.

I've been thinking of home, where they need not the
 light
 Of sun, nor moon, nor star ;
 Where the gates of pearl are not shut by day,
 For no night is there, but the weary may
 Find rest from the world afar.

I've been thinking of home, of the river of Life
That flows through the city so pure,
Of the tree that stands by the side of the stream,
Whose leaves in mercy with blessings teem,
The sin-wounded soul to cure.

I've been thinking of home, of the loved ones there,
Dear friends who have gone before,
With whom we walked to the death-river side,
And sadly thought, as we watched the tide,
Of the happy days of yore.

I've been thinking of home, and my heart is full
Of Love for the Lamb of God,
Who His precious life as a ransom gave
For a simple race, e'en our souls to save,
From justice' avenging rod.

I've been thinking of home, and I'm homesick now;
My spirit doth long to be
In the better land, where the ransomed sing
Of the Love of Christ, their Redeemer, King,
Of mercy so costly, so free.

I've been thinking of home, yea, "home, sweet
home ;"
Oh, there may we all unite
With the white-robed throng, and forever raise
To the triune God sweetest songs of praise,
With glory and honor and might !

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY.

September
Fifth.

WHAT we, when face to face we see
The Father of our souls, shall be,
John tells us, doth not yet appear :
Ah ! did he tell what we are here ?

A mind for thoughts to pass into,
A heart for loves to travel through,
Five senses to detect things near, —
Is this the whole that we are here ?

Rules baffle instincts, instincts rules ;
Wise men are bad, and good are fools ;
Facts evil ; wishes vain appear.
We cannot go ; why are we here ?

Oh, may we for assurance' sake,
Some arbitrary judgment take,
And wilfully pronounce it clear, —
For this or that 't is we are here ?

Or is it right, and will it do,
To pace the sad confusion through,
And say, It doth not yet appear
What we shall be, what we are here ?

Ah, yet, when all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head ;
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us receive ;

Must still believe, for still we hope
That in a world of larger scope
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone.



HOW DOES DEATH SPEAK OF OUR BELOVED ?

September
Sixth.

HOW does Death speak of our Beloved
When it has laid them low ;
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lip and brow ?

It clothes their every gift and grace
With radiance from the holiest place,
With light as from an angel's face ;

Recalling with resistless force
And tracing to their hidden source
Deeds scarcely noticed in their course.

This little, loving, fond device,
That daily act of sacrifice,
Of which, too late, we learn the price.

86 How does Death speak of our Beloved ?

Opening our weeping eyes to trace
Simple, unnoticed kindnesses,
Forgotten tones of tenderness,

Which evermore to us must be
Sacred as hymns in infancy,
Learned listening at a mother's knee.

Thus does Death speak of our Beloved
When it has laid them low ;
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lip and brow.

It sweeps their faults with heavy hand,
As sweeps the sea the trampled sand,
Till scarce the faintest print is scanned.

It shows how such a vexing deed
Was but a generous nature's weed,
Of some choice virtue run to seed ;

How that small fretting fretfulness
Was but love's over-anxiousness,
Which had not been had love been less.

This failing at which we repined,
But the dim shade of day declined,
Which should have made us doubly kind.

Thus does Death speak of our Beloved,
When it has laid them low ;
When it has set its hallowing touch
On speechless lip and brow.

It takes each failing on our part
And brands it in upon the heart
With caustic power and cruel art.

The small neglect that may have pained
A giant stature will have gained
When it can never be explained ;

The little service which had proved
How tenderly we watched and loved,
And those mute lips to glad smiles moved.

The little gift from out our store,
Which might have cheered some cheerless hour,
When they with earth's poor needs were poor,
But never will be needed more.

It shows our faults like fires at night,
It sweeps their feelings out of sight ;
It clothes their good in heavenly light.

O Christ, our Life, foredate the work of death,
And do this now ;
Thou who art Love, thus hallow our Beloved,
Not death — but Thou !

September
Seventh.

BETTER OFF.

"HE's better off." With words like these
Kind friends their comfort try to speak.
None doubts it of a man like him ;
Yet far off sound the words, and weak.

The heart that loves is not content,
However well the loved one be,
To have him happy far away,
But cries, "I want him still with me !"

That other country may be fair,
Brighter than aught the earth has shown,
But better any place with him
Than to be left here all alone.

Thus pleads the heart that God has made, —
He cannot blame what He has given, —
For, Heaven without Love could not be,
And, having Love, the earth *is* Heaven.

The folded hands, the closing eyes,
The yielding up of failing breath,
These not the worst : to tear apart
Two hearts that truly love is death.

Since Love is all the joy of Life,
In earth below or Heaven above,
Somewhere, we cannot help but trust,
God keeps for us the ones we love.

Like ships the storms drive far apart
 Wide o'er the sea 'neath cloud and sun,
 We 'll still sail for the self-same port,
 And meet there when the voyage is done.

And as we tell the story o'er,
 How we were driven by the blast,
 More sweet will be those sunny hours
 By contrast with the sorrows past.



September
 Eighth.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHEN the end comes, and we must say "good-
 by,"

And, "I am going to the quiet land ;"
 And, sitting in some loved place, hand in hand,
 For the last time together, you and I,
 We watch the winds blow, and the sunlight lie
 Above the spaces of our garden home,
 Soft by the washing of the western foam,
 Where we have lived and loved in days past by, —
 We must not weep, My Darling, or upbraid
 The quiet death who comes to part us twain ;
 But know that parting would not be such pain
 Had not our Love a perfect flower been made.
 And we shall find it in God's garden laid
 On that sweet day wherein we meet again.

September
Ninth.

SAFE.

AH, she was not an angel to adore,
She was not perfect — she was only this :
A woman to be prattled to, to kiss,
To praise with all sweet praises, and before
Whose face you never were ashamed to lay
The affections of your pride away.

I have kept fancy travelling to and fro
Full many an hour, to find what name were best,
If there were any sweeter than the rest,
That I might call My Darling so ;
And this of "Woman" seems to me the sweetest,
The finest, the most gracious, the completest.

The dust she wove about her, I agree,
Was poor and sickly, even to make you sad,
But this rough world we live in never had
An ornament more excellent than she ;
The earthly dress was all so frail that you
Could see the beauteous spirit shining through.

Not what she was, but what she was to me,
Is what I fain would tell ; from her was drawn
The softness of the eve, the light of dawn ;
With her and for her I could only see
What things were sweet and sensible and pure ;
Now all is dull, slow guessing, nothing sure.

My sorrow with this comfort yet is stilled —
 I do not dread to hear the Winter stir
 His wild winds up — I have no fear for her ;
 And all my love could never hope to build
 A place so sweet beneath heaven's arch of blue
 As she by death has been elected to.



WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

September
 Tenth.

SO many things there might have been,
 Had our dear child not died.
 We count them up and call them o'er,
 We weigh the less against the more, —
 The joy she never knew or shared,
 The bitter woes forever spared,
 The dangers turned aside,
 Heaven's full security, — and then
 Perplexed we sigh, — all might have been.

We might have seen her sweet cheeks glow
 With Love's own happy bloom,
 Her eyes with maiden gladness full,
 Finding the whole world beautiful ;
 We might have seen the joyance fail,
 The dear face sadden and grow pale,
 The smiles fade into gloom,
 Love's sun grow dim and sink again, —
 Either of these it might have been.

We might have seen her with the crown
Of wifehood on her head,
A queen of home's fair sovereignties,
With little children at her knees ;
Or, broken-hearted and alone,
Bereft and widowed of her own,
Mourning beside her dead, —
This thing or that, beyond our ken,
It might have been, — it might have been.

There is no need of question now,
No doubts or risks or fears :
Safe folded in the Eternal care,
Grown fairer each day and more fair,
With radiance in the clear young eyes
Which in cool depths of paradise
Look without stain of tears,
Reading the Lord's intent, and then,
Smiling to think what might have been.

We too will smile, O Dearest Child !
Our dull souls may not know
The deep things hidden from mortal sense,
Which feed thy heavenly confidence.
On this one sure thought can we rest,
That God has chosen for thee the best,
Or else it were not so ;
He called thee back to Heaven again
Because He knew what might have been.

September CROSSING THE RIVER.
Eleventh.

IN some lone walk through sunburnt fields,
By sandy path and dusty road,
Hast thou not cast thine eyes abroad,
Seen afar off a watered scene,
A grove of deep and tender green,
And found a river flows between?

There is a stream whose waves divide
Life from the shady shores beyond ;
And we on this sad side are found,
Toiling on sandy flats, I ween ;
Sighs our one moisture, tears our sheen,
While the still river flows between.

And yet, when our Belovèd rise
To gird them for the ford, and pass
From wilderness to springing grass,
From barren waste to living green,
We weep that they no more are seen,
And that the river flows between.

Ah, could we follow where they go,
And pierce the holy shade they find,
One grief were ours — to stay behind !
One hope — to join the blest unseen,
To plant our steps where theirs have been,
And find no river flows between !

September
Twelfth.

ELAINE.

SHE murmur'd "Vain, in vain : it cannot be.
He will not love me : how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless, innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest ;
And "him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "him or death."

* * * * *

And in those days she made a little song,
And called her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it : sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true Love, tho' given in vain, in vain ;
And sweet is death, who puts an end to pain :
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be :
Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet Love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow Love, if that could be ;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me ;
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die."



September
Thirteenth.

HER WISH.

WHEN I am gone, I mean from earthly sight,
Oh, let my face look down from yonder wall
Upon the things I've loved so well — all, all !
Not only for Love's sake, but as my right,
For I each household god have bowed before,
And left upon the altar of thy heart
A flame, that, ever burning more and more,
Shall draw us nearer tho' in flesh apart !

So, Dear One, when I'm there and you are here,
Let me look down upon your earthly life
From yonder wall, so shall I seem more near
To cheer and help thee in thy daily strife.
About my shrine keep sweetly scented flowers
And fresh green things, fit types of Love like ours !

LIFE IN DEATH AND DEATH IN LIFE.

**September
Fourteenth.**

IF the dread day that calls thee hence
 Through a red mist of fear should loom,
 (Closing in deadliest night and gloom
 Long hours of aching, dumb suspense,)
 And leave me to my lonely doom, —

I think, Belovèd, I could see
 In thy dear eyes the loving light
 Gaze into vacancy and night,
 And still say, "God is good to me,
 And all that He decrees is right."

That, watching thy slow struggling breath,
 And answering each imperfect sign,
 I still could pray thy prayer and mine,
 And tell thee, Dear, though this was death,
 That God was Love, and Love divine.

Could hold thee in my arms, and lay
 Upon my heart thy weary head,
 And meet thy last smile ere it fled ;
 Then hear, as in a dream, one say,
 " Now all is over, — she is dead."

Could smooth thy garments with fond care,
And cross thy hands upon thy breast,
And kiss thy eyelids down to rest,
And yet say no word of despair,
But, through my sobbing, "It is lost."

Could stifle down the gnawing pain,
And say, "We still divide our life ;
She has the rest, and I the strife,
And mine the loss, and hers the gain :
My ill with bliss for her is rife."

Then turn, and the old duties take —
Alone now — yet with earnest will
Gathering sweet, sacred traces still
To help me on, and, for thy sake,
My heart and life and soul to fill.

I think I could check vain, weak tears,
And toil, — although the world's great space
Held nothing but one vacant place,
And see the dark and weary years
Lit only by a vanished grace.

And sometimes, when the day was o'er,
Call up the tender past again,
Its painful joys, its happy pain,
And live it over yet once more,
And say, "But few more years remain."

And then when I had striven my best,
 And all around would smiling say,
 "See how time makes all grief decay,"
 Would lie down thankfully to rest,
 And seek thee in eternal day.

* * * * *



*September
 Fifteenth.*

DYING.

PASSING out of the shadow
 Into a purer light ;
 Stepping behind the curtain,
 Getting a clearer sight ;

Laying aside a burden,
 This weary mortal coil,
 Done with the world's vexations,
 Done with its tears and toil ;

Tired of all earth's playthings,
 Heartsick, and ready to sleep,
 Ready to bid our friends farewell,
 Wondering why they weep ;

Passing out of the shadow
 Into eternal day, —
 Why do we call it dying,
 This sweet-going away ?

THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

September

Sixteenth.

THREE pairs of dimpled arms, as white as snow,
Held me in soft embrace ;
Three little cheeks, like velvet peaches soft,
Were placed against my face !

Three pairs of tiny eyes, so clear, so deep,
Looked up in mine this even ;
Three pairs of lips kissed me a sweet "good-night,"
Three little forms from Heaven !

Ah ! it is well that "little ones" should love us !
It lights our faith, when dim,
To know that once our blessed Saviour bade them
Bring "little ones" to him.

And said He not "Of such is Heaven," and blessed
them,
And held them to His breast?
Is it not sweet to know that when they leave us,
'Tis then they go to rest?

And yet, ye tiny angels of my house,
Three hearts encased in mine,
How 't would be shattered if the Lord should say,
"Those angels are not thine" !

September
Seventeenth.

DEATH AND LOVE.

LOVE willed that Death should occupy the house —
Not hostilely — but like a generous foe
Who, guest perforce, inflicts no needless throe,
And scorns to jest, and gibe, and hold carouse.

And when the leaves were tender on the boughs,
And white the maytree shone, and thick like snow,
Death entered softly where Love bade him go,
Obedient to the suzerain of his vows.

And unto one whom worldly strife perplexed,
Whom sickness grieved and care made tremulous,
The foeman, pitying, brought the boon of peace.

“Or e’er these things his soul have greatly vexed,”
Death spake, benign, compassionating us,
“The Master hath ordained that they shall cease.”

White lilac, sweetest may, exotics white
(Gifts of dear hearts), made beautiful the gloom,
And breathed of blessedness to us on whom
Had fallen regret and longing infinite.

Yet still we weep. Till One arrayed in light,
Magnifical, more sweet than may in bloom,
More white than lilies, filled the darkened room,
And, through our tears, beamed glorious on our sight.

"My liegeman, Death, I sent to take him home,
For Death is kind, and life laborious,
The way is difficult, the travail sore.

"Now Death and he are gone, but I am come,"
(Love spake, benign, compassionating us,)
"And, lo, with you am I forevermore."

September
Eighteenth.

DUTY.

I REACH a duty, yet I do it not,
And therefore see no higher; but if done,
My view is brighten'd, and another spot
Seen on my moral sun.

For, be the duty high as angel's flight,
Fulfil it, and a higher will arise,
E'en from its ashes. Duty is infinite—
Receding as the skies.

And thus it is the purest most deplore
Their want of purity. As fold by fold,
In duties done, falls from their eyes, the more
Of duty they behold.

Were it not wisdom, then, to close our eyes
On duties crowding only to appall?
No: Duty is our ladder to the skies,
And, climbing not, we fall.

MY LITTLE BOY THAT DIED.

September

Nineteenth.

LOOK in his pretty face for just one minute,
His braided frock and dainty buttoned shoes,
His firm-shut hand, the favorite plaything in it ;
Then tell me, mothers, was it not hard to lose
And miss him from my side,
My little boy that died ?

How many another boy as dear and charming,
His father's hope, his mother's one delight,
Slips through strange sicknesses, all fear disarming,
And lives a long, long life in parents' sight ;
Mine was so short a pride ;
And then — my poor boy died.

I see him rocking on his wooden charger,
I hear him pattering through the house all day,
I watch his great blue eyes grow large and larger,
Listening to stories whether grave or gay
Told at the bright fireside,
So dark now, since he died.

But yet I often think my boy is living,
As living as my other children are ;
When good-night kisses I all round am giving,
I keep one for him though he is so far.
Can a mere grave divide
Me from him — though he died ?

So, while I come and plant it o'er with daisies
 (Nothing but childish daisies all year round),
 Continually God's hand the curtain raises,
 And I can hear the merry voice's sound,
 And feel him at my side,
 My little boy that died.



September
 Twentieth.

RESURGAM.

* * * * *

I HOLD

That if it be
 Less than enough to any soul to know
 Itself immortal, immortality
 In all its boundless spaces will not find
 A place designed
 So small, so low,
 That to a fitting home such soul can go.
 Out to the earthward brink
 Of that great tideless sea,
 Light from Christ's garments streams.
 Cowards who fear to tread such beams
 The angels can but pity when they sink.
 Believing thus, I joy although I lie in dust.
 I joy, not that I ask or choose,
 But simply that I must.
 I Love and fear not ; that I cannot lose,
 One instant this great certainty of peace.
 Long as God ceases not, I cannot cease ;
 I must arise.

THE LOVED AND LOST.

September
Twenty-first.

"THE loved and lost"! Why do we call them lost?
Because we miss them from our onward road?
God's unseen angel o'er our pathway crossed,
Looked on us all, and, loving them the most,
Straightway relieved them from life's weary load.

They are not "lost"; they are within the door
That shuts our loss, and every hurtful thing,
With angels bright, and loved ones gone before.
In their Redeemer's presence evermore,
And God himself their Lord and Judge and King.

And this we call a "loss"! Oh, selfish sorrow
Of selfish hearts! O we of little faith!
Let us look round, some argument to borrow
Why we in patience should await the morrow
That surely must succeed this night of death.

Aye, look upon this dreary desert path,
The thorns and thistles wheresoe'er we turn;
What trials and what tears, what wrongs and wrath,
What struggles and what strife the journey hath!
They have escaped from these; and lo! we mourn.

A poor wayfarer, leading by the hand
A little child, had halted by the well
To wash from off her feet the clinging sand,
And tell the tired boy of that bright land
Where, this long journey past, they longed to dwell ;

When lo ! the Lord, who "many mansions" had,
Drew near and looked upon the suffering twain,
Then pitying spake, "Give Me the little lad ;
In strength renewed, and glorious beauty clad,
I'll bring him with Me when I come again."

Did she make answer selfishly and wrong, —
"Nay, but the woes I feel he too must share" ?
No ! rather, bursting into grateful song,
She went her way rejoicing, and made strong
To struggle on, since he was freed from care.

We will do likewise ; death hath made no breach
In Love and sympathy, in hope and trust ;
No outward sign or sound our ears can reach,
But there's an inward, spiritual speech,
That greets us still, though mortal tongues be dust.

It bids us do the work that they laid down, —
Take up the song where they broke off the strain ;
So journeying till we reach the heavenly town,
Where are laid up our treasures and our crown,
And our lost loved ones will be found again.

September DEATH'S ALCHEMY.
 Twenty-Second.

THEY say that thou wert lovely on thy bier,
 More lovely than in life ; that when the thrall
 Of earth was loosed, it seemed as though a pall
 Of years were lifted, and thou didst appear
 Such as of old amidst thy home's calm sphere
 Thou satest, a kindly presence felt by all

In joy or grief, from morn to evening-fall,
 The peaceful genius of that mansion dear.
 Was it the craft of all-persuading Love
 That wrought this marvel? or is death indeed
 A mighty master, gifted from above
 With alchemy benign, to wounded hearts
 Ministering thus, by quaint and subtle arts,
 Strange comfort, whereon after-thought may feed?



A SONG FOR THE GIRL I LOVE.
 September
 Twenty-Third.

A SONG for the girl I love —
 God love her !

A song for the eyes that tender shine,
 And the fragrant mouth that melts on mine,
 The shimmering tresses uncontrolled
 That clasp her neck with tendrils of gold ;
 And the blossom mouth and the dainty chin,
 And the little dimples out and in —

The girl I love —

God love her !

A song for the girl I loved —

God loved her !

A song for the eyes of faded light,

And the cheek whose red rose waned to white,

And the quiet brow, with its shadow and gleam,

And the dark lashes drooped in a long, deep dream,

And the small hands crossed for their churchyard rest,

And the lilies dead on her sweet dead breast,

The girl I loved —

God loved her !



ALL BEAUTIFUL THINGS.

September

Twenty-Fourth.

ALL beautiful things bring sadness, nor alone
Music, whereof that wisest poet spake ;

Because in us keen longings they awake

After the good for which we pine and groan,

From which exil'd we make continual moan,

Till once again we may our spirits slake

At those clear streams, which man did first forsake,

When he would dig for fountains of his own.

All beauty makes us sad, yet not in vain ;

For who would be ungracious to refuse,

Or not to use, this sadness without pain,

Whether it flows upon us from the hues

Of sunset, from the time of stars and dews,

From the clear sky, or waters pure of stain?

September
Twenty-Fifth.

PREDESTINED.

I SAW you, knew you were mine ;
You saw me, knew I was yours ;
A moment and you were gone,
But the knowledge forever endures
In the heart of you and of me
That since ever the world took shape
As a thought in the mind of God,
Since ever each molten cape
Ran forth in a sea of fire,
For each other were you and I.
And though long or short be the time,
In a world that is distant or nigh
Each shall meet with the other yet,
Each shall read in the other's soul
What each knew to be written there
Since each at the other stole
The glance that was past like a flash,
Like a lightning flash revealed
The marriage of soul with soul
In eternity fixed and sealed.
A moment and you were gone,
And I passed along the street,
But the crowd was a mist to my eyes,
And the pavement was air to my feet ;
And I thought had I said but a word,
Had your glance but grown to a smile,

The way we must travel apart
 Had been shortened by many a mile.
 Yet though long we must journey alone
 On the upward pathway of Life,
 Though ages in cycles should pass,
 And the worlds in a blind dead strife
 Should crash to their final doom,
 Yet well do we know, you and I,
 That when or wherever it be,
 On the breast of my Love thou wilt lie.



September
 Twenty-Sixth.

LIFE.

LIFE 's not your own, — 't is but a loan
 To be repaid ;
 Soon the dark comer 's at the door,
 The debt is due : the dream is o'er, —
 Life 's but a shade.

Thus all decline that bloom or shine,
 Both star and flower ;
 'T is but a little odor shed,
 A light gone out, a spirit fled,
 A funeral hour.

Then let us show a tranquil brow,
 Whate'er befalls ;
 That we upon life's latest brink
 May look on death's dark face, and think
 An angel calls.

September
Twenty-Seventh.

TWO LIVES.

TWO lives — my life and hers,
Which yet shall grow apart,
Mine upward by the purer pulse that stirs
Its hidden heart,
From the deepest fibre of my memory's root,
On to the flower,
And the far prophecy of perfect fruit,
The hope of whose full hour
Doth quicken every secret seed
Of promise in my waiting will with power
To climb and ripen to the sun
Of her transfigured face, till in its light I read
Love's life is one.

* * * * *

One life that is — supreme,
Timeless, unlocal, full ;
Whereof we are a fragment and a dream,
Mirrors that dull,
Or flash the growing glory, which we share ;
One perfect room,
Through whose large silence and essential air
We listen and presume
Some prophecy of song complete ;
One orbiting purpose that doth round illumine
The ripening spirit's period
For pure fruition's hour, when Love and law shall meet
And close in God.

September
Twenty-Eighth.

SILENCE.

“ I KNOW what silence means ! ”

It is to live alone from day to day ;
To listen, too, for a long-loved voice always ;
To yearn and yearn, and be unsatisfied,
Because there is no loved one by my side —
This is what silence is.

To feel soft shadows kissing on my face ;
To miss a long-desired, dear-loved one's face ;
To strain the hearing for a single word ;
To learn the anguish of hope long deferred —
This is what silence is.

I might have music every day in the year ;
Might hear young voices rising sweet and clear,
Flinging soft laughter on the summer air ;
But since the voice beloved would not be there —
I know what silence means.

To sit in crowds and of them make no part ;
To feel the sick pain gnawing at my heart ;
To have no hopes, no wishes, no desires
Light up the embers of long-dead fires —
This is what silence is.

September
Twenty-Ninth.

AT RICHMOND.

THE sun-god's parting shafts of gold
Quivered and fell on field and wood ;
And silent, as in hours of old,
Upon the river-bank we stood ;
Did not that waning glory cast
A charm upon the flowing tide,
And give us back the summers past —
The bloom that fled, the lights that died ?

Silent, and filled with strange delight,
We watched the sunset brightness fade ;
And felt the first cool breath of night
Creep up through mist and mellow shade ;
It whispered of a time of rest,
Of pain outlived, and labor done,
When all the things we count the best
And live for, shall be fairly won.

And even in life's rugged ways
These happy thoughts of peace return,
For we have learnt to fix our gaze
Beyond the bounds which men discern ;
We know not where God's river flows,
Nor when its waves shall wash our feet,
And yet each foretaste of repose
He gives us is divinely sweet.

September
Thirtieth.

SINCE SEPTEMBER.

BELOVED one, who entered, last Autumn,
God's own rest and peace,
Ah ! what have the months brought unto you
Since your glad release ?

And what have you seen of His glory,
Ineffably bright ?
How near have you been to the presence
Of Love and of light ?

When you rose, free from fetters of earth-life,
And saw on the bed
The pale, lifeless form in its silence,
And heard, "She is dead," —

When you stood in the chamber of sorrow,
In the hushed, darkened room,
With its weird changing phantoms and shadows,
In silence and gloom, —

Did a thrill of heavenly rapture,
Of ecstasy strange,
Come over your soul in that moment
Of wonderful change ?

VOL. II. — 8

When that which was you extended
Whitely robed for the tomb,
With the folded hands clasping pale lilies
Shining fair through the gloom, —

Did you mark all our tears and our anguish?
Did it grieve you to see
That we took no note of your presence,
Your sweet ministry?

* * * * *

The Autumn came on in its glory,
The maples burned bright ;
And brooded o'er hillside and valley
The magical light.

Again through low-lying shadows
Gleam faintly the hills ;
Again all the air a strange hush
Of expectancy fills.

The rare, perfect days you so treasured,
We feel you are near ;
We wait, half expectant and silent,
Your footsteps to hear.

Canst thou come, O Belovèd ! and tell us
That which never had been told ?
Can there not be again sweet communion
For us, as of old ?

I know you are near, when my spirit
Perceives purer Life ;
When messages come from the angels
With high meaning rife.

Ah, what to you has this Autumn
In its loveliness been,
If its beauty to us is so wondrous,
Though our vision dim ?

You would tell us, My Belovèd,
That to you is so dear ;
Your Love is as pure and as perfect
As when you were here.

You read all our questioning longings,
Our fear and our awe ;
But between the dead and the living
God fixeth a law.

Not yours is the power to o'ercome it :
Death is dumb to us here,
Because life is deaf to its meanings,
Its messages clear.

So, Love, though you answer my longings,
When my heart calls for you,
And your patient love ever enfolds me,
So tender and true, —

My eyes are too dim to behold you,
Though you are so near ;
But soon in a radiant dawning
Will all things grow clear.

For soon among flowers that are fadeless,
White lilies of peace,
We shall hold sweet communion again, Love,
That never shall cease.

October.

*Beside the meadow bars the lowing cows
Gather at fall of eve, with frosty breath.
The gold of Autumn gilds the forest boughs.
How sweetly charmed is Summer to her death!*

*The chilly wind sighs round the naked thorn,
The dainty flowers have perished on the glade;
The Eastern star, at close of even born,
Shines cold through dewy night's returning shade.*

*But when from morning's gates, at purple day,
The smiling spirit of the light returns,
And over towering pines the sunbeams play,
As broad and bright the day's great censer burns;*

*Oh! then there is a glory in the air,
Such as the pride of Summer never gave!
A gladdening presence lingers everywhere,
The brightened beauty's pathway to the grave.*

October
First.

TWO LIVES.

TWO names upon a yew-tree rudely cut,
Two lovers whispering by the church-yard wall,
Two children playing round the solemn graves,
Give call for call.

Two lives that ran so near in other years,
Two hands close locked in desolate leave-taking,
Two lovers giving passionate kiss for kiss
In wild heart-breaking.

One life full up with crowded years of toiling,
One patient heart slow breaking day by day,
A world of hopes in one brief moment shattered
By life's decay.

Those names upon the yew-tree slowly fading,
Those dates long stolen by the cruel years,
That grave beneath the church-wall shadow glim-
mering
With heaven's tears.

A MEMORY AND A PRESENCE.

October

Second.

WHEN clasping in mine own the hand
Of him I loved the best,
Whose converse cheered, as sight of land
Cheers mariners distressed,
How once I loved the darkening hour
Of summer's happy day,
As gently from each leaf and flower
The daylight passed away.

For he had learnt to bear his part
In earth's unending strife,
To labor with unflinching heart
Amid the ills of life, —
To feel adversity and pain,
Hopes blighted, bitter wrong,
And yet, ere long, to find again —
God's peace which makes men strong.

So would he talk of bygone years
In that hush'd eventide,
Of former hopes, delights, and fears,
Of early friends who died,
And wisely would my future trace ;
Then leaving things of time,
In raptured tones, with upturned face,
Would speak of themes sublime.

He had that wordless eloquence,
That strange, that wondrous power,
Which sways the soul with force intense
In calm of such an hour ;
And walking where the shadows steal
Across the garden here,
Alone with memory still I feel —
His spirit ever near.

October
Third.

OF LATE.

THERE was a time when I could think of death
As calmly as of life ; 't was ere I knew
What sacrament of joy beyond all dream
Lies in the Life welded from Love of two.

Now at its whisper I more closely cling
In deadliest fear to thee. Yet one must die,
And some day one must leave the other here, —
Ay, one must go first, either thou or I !

And then I heavenward turn my anguished face,
And thank God that the way at least is free ;
And none can hold, if through the pass of death,
Even as through life, I choose to follow thee !

October
Fourth.

UNSEEN.

"IF he would only help me but once more !"
 Bending beneath the burden low, I cried.
My eyes were blinded, and I did not see
 The shining angel standing at my side.
I did not hear the faint, sweet words that fell, —
 Replies that met my spirit's deepest needs ;
I did not heed the touch of holy hands
 That thrilled my own with strength for nobler deeds.
Oh, friend, in Heaven's sweet peace enfolded now,
 How could I dream your Love would find a means
To ease the burden and to point the way,
 And lead me to the fair Life of my dreams?

—●—

October
Fifth.

LONGINGS.

IF I could hold your hands to-night,
 Just for a little while, and know
That only I, of all the world,
 Possessed them so !

A slender shape in that old chair,
 If I could see you here to-night,
Between me and the twilight pale —
 So light and frail —

Your cool white dress, its folding lost
 In one broad sweep of shadow gray ;
 Your weary head just drooped aside,
 That sweet old way ;

Bowed like a flower-cup dashed with rain,
 The darkness crossing half your face,
 And just the glimmer of a smile
 For one to trace.

If I could see your eyes that reach
 Far out into the farthest sky,
 Where, past the trail of dying suns,
 The old years lie,

Or touch your silent lips to-night,
 And steal the sadness from their smile,
 And find the last kiss they have kept
 This weary while !

If it could be — Oh, all in vain
 The restless trouble of my soul
 Sets, as the great tides of the moon,
 Toward your control !

In vain the longings of the lips,
 The eye's desire, and the pain ;
 The hunger of the heart — O Love,
 Is it in vain ?

October
Sixth.

AT PEACE.

SHUT close the wearied eyes, O sleep !
So close no dreams may come between,
Of all the sorrows they have seen :
Too long, too sad, their watch hath been.
Be faithful, sleep,
Lest they should wake, remembering ;
Lest they should wake, and waking weep,
O sleep, sweet sleep !

Clasp close the wearied hands, O rest !
Poor hands, so thin and feeble grown
With all the tasks which they have done ;
Now they are finished, every one.
O happy rest,
Fold them at last from laboring,
In quiet on the quiet breast,
O rest, sweet rest !

Press close unto the heart, O death !
So close, not any pulse may stir
The garments of her sepulchre ;
So, life hath been so sad to her !
O kindest death,
Within thy safest sheltering
Nor pain nor sorrow entereth —
O death, sweet death !

October
Seventh.

A YEAR.

SHE has been just a year in Heaven.
Unmarked by white moon or gold sun,
By stroke of clock or clang of bell,
Or shadow lengthening on the way,
In the full noon and perfect day
In safety's very citadel,
The happy hours have sped, have run ;
And, rapt in peace, all pain forgot,
She whom we love, her white soul shriven,
Smiles at the thought and wonders not.

We have been just a year alone, —
A year whose calendar is sighs,
And dull, perpetual wishfulness,
And smiles, each covert for a tear,
And wandering thoughts, half there, half here,
And weariful attempts to guess
The secret of the hiding skies,
The soft, inexorable blue,
With gleaming hints of glory sown,
And Heaven behind, just shining through.

So sweet, so sad, so swift, so slow,
So full of eager growth and light,
So full of pain which blindly grows,
So full of thoughts which either way
Have passed and crossed and touched each day,

To us a thorn, to her a rose ;
 The year so black, the year so white,
 Like rivers twain their course have run ;
 The earthly stream we trace and know,
 But who shall paint the heavenly one ?

A year ! We gather up our powers,
 Our lamps we consecrate and trim ;
 Open all windows to the day,
 And welcome every heavenly air.
 We will press forward and will bear,
 Having this word to cheer the way :
 She, storm-tossed once, is safe with Him, —
 Healed, comforted, content, forgiven ;
 And while we count these heavy hours
 Has been a year, — a year in Heaven.



October
 Eighth.

GOING TO SLEEP.

AFTER the day's long playing,
 Tired as tired can be,
 My baby girl comes saying,
 "Papa, will you rock me?"

The busy works of daytime
 Allure her now no more ;
 The books and toys of playtime
 Are scattered round the floor.

Off now with shoe and stocking,
Off with the crumpled dress :
She 's ready now for rocking,
For crooning and caress.

And slowly sinking, sinking,
The night comes down the skies :
While drooping, opening, winking,
Sleep settles on her eyes.

She does not fear the sleeping :
Out o'er the sea of dark,
Close held in papa's keeping,
She drifts in her frail bark.

No matter for the morrow,
Enough that papa knows ;
With smile undimmed by sorrow,
Out in the dark she goes.

So should it be with dying :
Drop earthly cares and fears ;
In Father's arms you 're lying ;
Look up with smiles, not tears.

You know not of the waking?
Be not with fear beguiled ;
For, when the morning 's breaking
He 'll not forget His child.

October
Ninth.

TO ONE IN HEAVEN.

THE earth is new — it was thy love
That made her new ;
The Heavens are new — it was thy love
That made them new.

Now thou art gone, while I alone
Am left to face
The wonder of a world unknown,
A strange blank space.

What right had death, 'twixt me and thee,
His scythe to sway ?
He cannot teach the soul of me
A surer way.

I want thee ; faith, hope, love are changed,
And I am weak :
Old paths wherein my spirit ranged,
I blindly seek.

Yet, Friend, though thou art gone, through thee
Mid all this new
Maze of dim thought, dark mystery,
I'll find the clew !

October
Tenth.

HIS LIGHT.

O H, gates that were left ajar
When my Lord the Christ passed through !
I see in the light afar,
Steady and strong and true,
A soul released from its prison pain
Enter the mansion of Love's great gain.

Why are the gazers dumb,
And blind the uplifted eyes?
On the heavenly side they come
With welcoming rhapsodies !
Swing on your hinges, open wide !
Bliss of immortals no longer hide !

Oh, we are blind and dumb,
Stricken of heart and sore,
The familiar ways of home
Are desolate evermore ;
Though an angel enters the deathless sphere,
Love had crowned her an angel here.

Love hushed her infant fears,
Love o'er the child kept guard,
And the maiden's happy years
Safe in the watch and ward
Of a Love immortal as angels are,
Grew in beauty no frost could mar.

VOL. II. — 9

Love in its yearning pain
 Over the fading days,
 Watched if a sign of gain
 Thrilling the heart to praise
 Lifted the shadow gathering low,
 Dulled the edge of the coming woe.

Oh, it is love in tears,
 Bending under the cross !
 Love aghast at the years
 It must suffer measureless loss !
 Dear Love blind, though the gates ajar
 Tell where the vanished angels are.

Time for the voiceless pain !
 The grief that must have its way !
 Time for the sorrowful rain
 That drips through the desolate day !
 But over all, like a brooding star,
 His light, who left the gates ajar !



October
 Eleventh.

UNDER THE LEAVES.

THICK green leaves from the soft brown earth,
 Happy spring-time hath called them forth ;
 First faint promise of summer bloom
 Breaths from the fragrant, sweet perfume,
 Under the leaves.

Lift them ! what marvellous beauty lies
Hidden beneath, from our thoughtless eyes !
May flowers, rosy or purest white,
Lift their cups to the sudden light
Under the leaves.

Are there no lives whose holy deeds—
Seen by no eye save His who reads
Motive and action—in silence grow
Into rare beauty, and bud and blow
Under the leaves?

Fair white flowers of faith and trust,
Springing from spirits bruised and crushed ;
Blossoms of Love, rose-tinted and bright,
Touched and painted with Heaven's own light
Under the leaves—

Full fresh clusters of duty borne,
Fairest of all in that shadow grown :
Wondrous the fragrance that sweet and rare
Comes from the flower-cups hidden there,
Under the leaves.

Though unseen by our vision dim,
Bud and blossom are known to Him :
Wait we content for His heavenly ray—
Wait till our Master Himself one day
Lifteth the leaves.

October
Twelfth.

AFTER DEATH.

* * * * *

SWEET friends ! What the women lave
 For its last bed of the grave
 Is but a hut which I am quitting ;
 Is a garment no more fitting ;
 Is a cage from which at last,
 Like a hawk, my soul has passed.
 Love the inmate, not the room, —
 The wearer, not the garb, — the plume
 Of the falcon, not the bars
 Which kept him from those splendid stars.

* * * * *

Farewell, friends ! Yet not farewell ;
 Where I am ye, too, shall dwell.
 I am gone before your face,
 A moment's time, a little space.
 When ye come where I have stepped
 Ye will wonder why ye wept.
 Ye will know, by wise Love taught,
 That here is all and there is naught.
 Weep awhile, if ye are fain, —
 Sunshine still must follow rain ;
 Only not a death, — for death,
 Now, I know, is that first breath
 Which our souls draw when we enter
 Life, which is of all life centre.

* * * * *

October
Thirteenth.

IF.

IF when her eyes meet mine my eyes are sealed
By the last twilight that shall ever fall,
With life and hope forever past recall
And all their longings by death's love-kiss healed,
Perhaps forgiveness, like some lily fair,
May bloom for him who sleeps so soundly there.

If, under shadows that could never cease,
I was at rest, forevermore at rest —
A knot of wildwood flowers on my breast,
If placed there by her hand might send me peace —
A violet cluster, taking from the skies
The summer depths of her sad, violet eyes.

If in the silence of that last long sleep
She could but read the mystery and see
That she alone was all life held for me,
Mayhap across her heart one pang would sweep,
To think that even death could make no less
The soul's dim sense of utter loneliness.

And if at last we wandering shall meet
In heavenly fields of asphodel above,
Will the remembrance of our buried love
Make the white paths of paradise less sweet,
If in the byways of that far-off land
Our journeys cross, by some lone stream, and we together stand?

October
fourteenth.

A COMRADE.

"I AM Joy," she said ; but her voice was low,
Too low for laughter ;
"I am Love ;" but her eyes lacked love's quick glow,
And the tear that springs after ;
"I am Life ;" but she seemed too calm, too still,
Like one who waits, but forgets to-morrow ;
Then she took my hand, and I did her will,
And knew she was Sorrow.
And she led me on through the world we see,
Where smiles are many ;
Through the fever and stir of life's hot glee
That waits never for any ;
Through the silence of rest when dreams are o'er
And stillness is sweeter than hope's best pleasure ;
Through the peace when nought is to garner more
Of love's plenished treasure.
So at length we twain were the truest pair,
More kind than lovers.
Then she said, "After blight the boughs are bare,
Yet the strong tree recovers ;
And anew hast thou Life, Love, Joy, at call :
Unclasp my hand." And I clasped, denying,
"Thou art best, more strong, more true than all ;
And after thee — dying."

October
Fifteenth.

A MOTHER'S WAIL.

MY Babe ! My tiny Babe ! My only Babe !
My single rosebud in a crown of thorns !
My life that in that narrow hut of life,
Whence I looked forth upon a night of storm,
Burned with the lustre of the moon and stars !

My Babe ! My tiny Babe ! My only Babe !
Behold the bud is gone ! the thorns remain !
My lamp hath fallen from its niche — ah, me !
Earth drinks the fragrant flame, and I am left
Forever and forever in the dark !

My Babe ! My Babe ! My own and only Babe !
Where art thou now ? If somewhere in the sky
An angel hold thee in his radiant arms,
I challenge him to clasp thy tender form
With half the fervor of a mother's love !

Forgive me, Lord ! forgive my reckless grief !
Forgive me that this rebel, selfish heart
Would almost make me jealous for my child,
Though thy own lap enthroned him. Lord, thou hast
So many such ! I have — ah ! had but one !

Oh, yet once more, My Babe, to hear thy cry !
Oh, yet once more, My Babe, to see thy smile !
Oh, yet once more to feel against my breast
Those cool, soft hands ; that warm, wet, eager mouth,
With the sweet sharpness of its budding pearls !

But it must nevermore be mine
To mark the growing meaning in thine eyes,
To watch thy soul unfolding leaf by leaf,
Or catch, with ever-fresh surprise and joy,
Thy dawning recognition of the world.

Three different shadows of thyself, My Babe,
Change with each other while I weep. The first
The sweetest, yet the not least fraught with pain,
Clings like My loving Boy around my neck,
Or purrs and murmurs softly at my feet !

Another is a little mound of earth ;
That comes the oftenest, Darling ! In my dreams,
I see it beaten by the midnight rain,
Or chilled beneath the moon. Ah ! what a couch
For that which I have shielded from a breath
That would not stir the violets on thy grave !

The third, My precious Babe ! The third, O Lord !
Is a fair cherub face beyond the stars,
Wearing the roses of a mystic bliss,
Yet sometimes not unsaddened by a glance
Turned earthward on a mother in her woe !

This is the vision, Lord, that I would keep
Before me always. But, alas ! as yet,
It is the dimmest, and the rarest, too !
Oh, touch my sight, or break the cloudy bars
That hide it, lest I madden where I kneel !



October
Sixteenth.

AFTER DEATH.

'T WAS in that other land, across
The sea of death, they met again ;
And hearts which long had suffered loss
Gave up their hold on pain.

"At last, at last with clearer sight,"
He said, "We meet, no more to part :
For all these years have never changed
My faithful, loving heart."

"The way was long and rough," said she,
With overflowing, happy eyes ;
"But yet Hope's voice in undertone
Sang low 'Beyond the skies.'"

And so a lifelong grief became
Joy which this earth had never given :
And disappointment nobly borne
Was victory, in Heaven.

October
Seventeenth.

HABIT.

WHY do we fail so oft to show the love
 We have for those we love or think we care
 For? Perhaps the love we show is not Love!
 We think it is! Perhaps it is so rare
 To be what we wish to be, that, e'en our
 Love lies bleeding, and, that we fail to see
 The fault that in us lies. Is this the key
 To solve the problem deep? Oh, blessed hour
 For you, for me, when we shall realize
 The frailty of all love save His, and rise
 To heights unknown before, and learn to know
 That "Love is never lost tho' hearts run waste,"
 That habit breeds indifference, that low
 The heart must be that would of Heaven taste.



October
Eighteenth.

ELEONORA.

AS precious gums are not for lasting fire,
 They but perfume the temple and expire;
 So was the soon exhal'd and vanished hence,
 A short sweet odor, of a vast expense.
 She vanish'd, — we can scarcely say she dy'd,
 For but a now did Heaven and earth divide:
 She pass'd serenely with a single breath,
 This moment perfect health, the next was death.

* * * * *

As gentle thoughts our waking thoughts pursue,
Or one dream pass'd, we slide into a new ;
So close they follow, such wild order keep,
We think ourselves awake, and are asleep :
So softly death succeeded life in her, —
She did but dream of Heaven and she was there.
No pains she suffer'd, nor expir'd with noise,
Her soul was whisper'd out with God's still voice.

* * * * *



October
Nineteenth.

WHAT IS TO COME.

WHAT is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good — was good to
show,

Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were.
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered even so.

Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe —
Dear, though it spoil and break us ! — need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow ;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare,
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow,
What is to come.

October
Twentieth.

IN MEMORIAM.

* * * * *

DO we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame,
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue ;
Shall Love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death :
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

* * * * *

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every Winter change to Spring.

* * * * *

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

* * * * *

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness hardly seen before
Comes out — to some one of his race :

So Dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see ;
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

* * * * *

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most ;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,
 Than never to have loved at all.



October
 Twenty-First.

THE WHITE MOTH.

IF a leaf rustled, she would start ;
 And yet she died a year ago.
 How had so frail a thing the heart
 To journey where she trembled so ?
 And so they turn and turn in fright,
 Those little feet, in so much night.

The light above the poet's head
Streamed on the page and on the cloth ;
And twice and thrice there buffeted
On the black pane a white-winged moth.
'T was Annie's soul that beat outside
And " Open, open, open !" cried.

" I could not find the way to God !
There were too many flaming suns
For sign-posts, and the fearful road
Led over wastes where millions
Of tangled comets hissed and burned —
I was bewildered, and I turned.

" Oh, it was easy then ! I knew
Your window, and no star beside.
Look up, and take me back to you ! "
He rose, and thrust the window wide.
'T was but because his brain was hot
With rhyming ; for we heard her not.

But poets, polishing a phrase,
Show anger over trivial things ;
And as she blundered in the blaze
Toward him on ecstatic wings,
He raised a hand and smote her dead ;
Then wrote, " That I had died instead ! "

October
Twenty-Second.

TIRED ONES.

SO tired ;
Such weary mothers, love inspired,
But worn with love's demands
Until the trembling hands
Falter above their tasks, and stay
While white lips pray.
So spent, undone ;
On guard above each little one
As though each dying day
Carried no tired mothers far away
From their fond world, and so
They fain would go
Bent to love's least behest —
A child clasped to the breast.

So weary ; stooping low
Above sweet sleeping faces when the glow
Of twilight fades, but not so tired as they
Who have no care all day
For loved ones, young or old ; no cheeks to touch
With kisses as they sleep, or such
Dear riches as Love brings —
Dearer than diadem of kings
The weariest hand
Is empty, having no command
Of loving lips, no care of age or youth ;
No lips to call for it, in truth,
From purple dawn till night — no wealth to hold
Dearer than fretted gold.

October
Twenty-Third.

A DREAM.

I HAD a dream last night ;
Dear, sit beside me, let me tell my dream,
Now while the glory of the sunset gleam
Makes yonder windows bright.

I stood as now with you,
By this same window, watching dreamily
How floated the soft clouds across the sky,
A sky of pale clear blue.

And even as I gazed
The clouds took shape and life, and there unfurled
A fair procession from the spirit world,
Before my sight amazed.

We saw them pass along, —
Majestic age, and merry childish swarms,
And mothers with their infants in their arms :
They seemed a blessed throng.

And ever as they passed
They turned to greet us, waving eager hands,
As friends by busy years and many lands
Long parted, meet at last.

We were too far apart
To trace their features or to hear their speech ;
But our souls owned their kinship, each to each,
Heart answered unto heart.

VOL. II. — 10

"Dear friends are these, I know,"
I said, "and shall be ours: they with clear eye
Recognize us from far," you said,
"But I have seen them long ago."

And then a sudden light,
Like to the glory summer sunsets shed
Through these fair pictured windows overhead,
Transformed them rosy bright,

As if the morning broke
Over a fair cold world of frost and snow,
Which smile transfigured into life and glow,
And straightway I awoke.

Ah me! But it were bliss,
Strength to the feet that fail, the hearts that sink,
If sleep would always show the golden link
Between that world and this.



October
Twenty-fourth.

HEREAFTER.

WHEN we are dead, when you and I are dead,
Have rent and tossed aside each earthly fetter,
And wiped the grave-dust from our wondering eyes,
And stand together, fronting the sunrise,
I think that we shall know each other better.

Puzzle and pain will lie behind us then ;
All will be known and all will be forgiven.
We shall be glad of every hardness past,
And not one earthly shadow shall be cast
To dim the brightness of the bright new Heaven.

And I shall know, and you as well as I,
What was the hindering thing our whole lives through
Which kept me always shy, constrained, distressed ;
Why I, to whom you were the first and best,
Could never, never be my best with you.

Why, loving you as dearly as I did,
And prizing you above all earthly good,
I yet was cold and dull when you were by,
And faltered in my speech or shunned your eye,
Unable quite to say the thing I would ;

Could never front you with the happy ease
Of those whose perfect trust has cast out fear,
Or take, content, from Love his daily dole,
But longed to grasp and be and have the whole,
As blind men long to see, the deaf to hear.

My Dear Love, when I forward look and think
Of all these baffling barriers swept away
Against which I have beat so long and strained,
Of all the puzzles of the past explained,
I almost wish that we could die to-day.

October
Twenty-Fifth.

THE OTHER ONE.

SWEET little maid with winsome eyes
That laugh all day through the tangled hair ;
Gazing with baby looks so wise
Over the arm of the oaken chair,
Dearer than you is none to me,
Dearer than you there can be none,
Since in your laughing face I see
Eyes that tell of another one.

Here where the firelight softly glows,
Sheltered and safe and snug and warm,
What to you is the wind that blows,
Driving the sleet of the winter storm?
Round your head the ruddy light
Glints on the gold from your tresses spun,
But deep is the drifting snow to-night
Over the head of the other one.

Hold me close as you sagely stand,
Watching the dying embers shine ;
Then shall I feel another hand
That nestled once in this hand of mine, —
Poor little hand, so cold and chill,
Shut from the light of stars and sun,
Clasping the withered roses still
That hide the face of the sleeping one.

Laugh, little maid, while laugh you may,
Sorrow comes to us all, I know ;
Better perhaps for her to stay
Under the drifting robe of snow.
Sing while you may your baby songs,
Sing till your baby days are done ;
But oh, the ache of the heart that longs
Night and day for the other one !

SPRING AND AUTUMN.

October
Twenty-Sixth.

GOD in His heart made Autumn for the young ;
That they might learn to accept the approach
of age
In golden woods and starry saxifrage,
And valleys all with azure mists o'erhung.
For over death a radiant veil He flung,
That the inevitable heritage
Might come revealed in beauty, and assuage
The dread with which the heart of youth is wrung.
And for the consolation of the old
He made the delicate, swift, tumultuous Spring ;
That every year they might again behold
The image of their youth in everything,
And bless the fruit-trees flowering in the cold,
Whose harvest is not for their gathering.

October

SOME NIGHT.

~~Twenty-Seventh.~~

SOME night, when shadows 'shiver in the garden
ways,

And flowers bloom beneath the moon's white rays,
And brown moths flutter near the window light—
Your heart will learn the truth—some night!
A swaying, pallid rose will touch your cheek,
And with its fragrant, shadowy lips will speak;
From out the dusk the red gleam of a firefly,
Or some far trail of lightning on the sky,
Will hold for you such memories of the past
That I shall know your thoughts are mine at last.
Mine, though the seas of death have rolled between,
And I the mystery of mysteries have seen!

The star of hope will tremble in my sky,
For you will learn that Love can never die.
Once in the long ago I told you this—
Sealing the words with my first tender kiss;
Then those sweet eyes with bitter tears were wet—
Weeping to think that you might die and I forget . . .
Upon my cold, dead lips, one last, sad night,
Your warm kiss fell like glowing, golden light.
And now another than my own true hand
Has led you to the borders of love's wonderland;
But, standing there with smiles and blushes bright,
The truth will thrill your heart—some night!

October GONE SEAWARD.

Twenty-Eighth.

A MERRY tiresome child, an hour ago,
That shouted and made haste for life's mere
sake,

And knew no why for wanderings to and fro :
A creature boisterously blithe to be ;
And playtime was all hours when he might wake.
An hour ago : and now, great river-tide,
What mute dead thing is it that thou dost hide?
What mute dead thing they cannot win from thee?

An hour ago his laughters broke the sky :
And then, a foot that slipped, a parted wave,
And life that was to be has all passed by.
A plunge, a struggle, and he has forgot :
And 't is a nought they seek and cannot save.
Give back, great river-tide, the thing they seek ;
Give the unstirring limb, the frigid cheek,
Give back the dead ; the child returneth not.

And 't is the common tale of life and death ;
And 't is the tale that never shall seem true,
For life is ours the while we draw our breath,
And death we know not save its alien name.
A restless child that leaped and laughed and grew ;
And sudden there's but silence and a void.
Great river-tide, give back the thing destroyed,
And, Greater River, bear him whence he came.

October
Twenty-Ninth.

AWAKENING.

HEAVEN is a state of fine resolve, I deem ;
And shall he breathe in Heaven who never drew
His soul's breath deeply, as enraged to do,
Drunk with some glimpse of God's consummate
scheme ?

Oh, we are never saved until it seem,
In some mad moment, that the Truth is true,
Inexorable, insatiate to pursue,
Hem us around, and hurl us from our dream ; —

Then find our souls fit allies marshalling,
A Heaven alert for our awakening.



October
Thirtieth.

RECOGNITION.

WHEN souls that have put off their mortal gear
Stand in the pure, sweet light of Heaven's day,
And wondering deeply what to do or say,
And trembling more with rapture than with fear,
Desire some token of their friends most dear,
Who there some time have made their happy stay,
And much have longed for them to come that way,
What shall it be, this sign of hope and cheer?
Shall it be tone of voice or glance of eye?
Shall it be touch of hand or gleam of hair
Blown back from spirit-brows by Heaven's air,
Things which of old we knew our dearest by?
Oh, naught of this ; but, if our Love is true,
Some secret sense shall cry, 'T is you and — you !

October
Thirty-First.

WHERE.

THAT is her body lying there,
So sweetly still,
As if but sleep had worked thereon
Its perfect will.

The violets strewn about her seem
To haunt her rest ;
And as in dreams, she clasps the rose
Upon her breast.

How strange it is we are so sure
She is not there,
Though all her precious outwardness
Is still so fair?

For we have seen her just as still
Full oft before ;
But now we know those drowsy lids
Will ope no more.

She is not there ; and, if not there,
Where must she be ?
Elsewhere or nowhere, that at least
Our thought can see.

Nowhere ? But then — Oh, shallow thought ! —
She is no more.
The most has perished, but the least
Is as before.

This cannot perish ; this may change
From form to form ;
In grass and blossom reaching up
To sun and storm.

A thousand summers shall grow pale
Through all the land,
And still her precious dust shall lie
In God's right hand ;

And, lying there, shall take the shape
He thinketh best,
But never lovelier than is now
On it impressed.

And shall the garment that she wore
Exist so long,
And she that wore it be — as is
An ended song?

An ended song? But even that
Is somewhere still,
It doth the heart with burden sweet
Of memory fill.

May not her somewhere be as much
As that ; no more?
To walk in dream-land up and down
A sobbing shore?

To live in deeds, for her dear sake
 Made pure and true ;
In great aspirings that from her
 Their being drew.

But that which lieth there, so still,
 In grass and flower
Shall live again, nor less for that
 Be memory's dower.

And shall the mask she wore have thus
 A twofold life,
And she that wore it only live
 Where thought is rife?

And so from nowhere back my heart
 Returns in glee ;
She is not there, since, having been,
 She still must be.

But, oh ! how vast and dim appears
 That elsewhere land,
Where she, with others gone before,
 Walks hand in hand !

My thought goes forth to seek her there,
 But soon returns,
Dazed by that rose of light wherein
 Her spirit burns.

Content to leave her there in peace
With her dear God,
It wanders in the earthly paths
Her feet have trod.

Then from her high and holy place
Full soon I know
Her thought sweeps down, my thought to meet
With music low.

With such sweet trysts as these my soul
Can be content,
Until my soul with hers again
In Heaven is blent.

If thou in thy new home canst be
As patient, Sweet,
Our days will be most happy till
Again we meet.

November.

*A gradual failing in the summer light;
Bright sunsets dying in the crimson West;
Brown leaves that fall in the quiet autumn night;
A swift decay in flowers we love the best;
A flush of life, slow-deepening into rest;
A wintry wind beneath a threatening sky;
Snowflakes that fall, and gather, and then die!
Spring, with its changing winds and leafy vest;
Full Summer, with its wealth of flowers that lie
Sparkling like gems upon a monarch's crest;
Then round to Autumn! So our brief years fly,
So run our days! Sometimes in sunshine drest,
And oft in cloud! So fleeteth fitfully
Each little life into the great eternity!*

November
First.

GRAY.

GRAY stones, and there be many such hereby,
Only a mouldering wall of granite gray ;
But once we came here, Sweet Heart, you and I,
In an old world, it seems so far away.

In some old world, so far away it seems,
I scarce can think it was the same — so far,
The memory of half-forgotten dreams
Is not so strange as those lost summers are.

Yet not a single stone has changed his face ;
The tinkling rivulet has the self-same tune ;
And the old shadow fills the self-same place
Here in the dreamy golden afternoon.

And on the summer days the hush'd uproar
Of the wave's wash comes faint and far away ;
The white sea-fowl are wheeling by the shore,
The same that we saw once upon a day.

Well, you are dead, and I am here alone,
Time bringeth change to us as years roll on.
There is no pity in this hard, gray stone,
He will be just the same when I am gone.

HOMESICK IN HEAVEN.

November

Second.

THE ANGEL.

* * * * *

YE know me not, sweet sisters? All in vain
 Ye seek your lost ones in the shapes they wore ;
 The flower once opened may not bud again,
 The fruit once fallen finds the stem no more.

Child, lover, sire, — yea, all things loved below, —
 Fair pictures damasked on a vapor's fold, —
 Fade like the roseate flush, the golden glow,
 When the bright curtain of the day is rolled.

I was the babe that slumbered on thy breast.
 And, sister, mine the lips that called thee bride.
 Mine were the silvered locks thy hand caressed,
 That faithful hand, my faltering footstep's guide !

Each changing form, frail vesture of decay,
 The soul unclad forgets it once hath worn,
 Stained with the travel of the weary day,
 And shamed with rents from every wayside thorn.

To lie, an infant, in thy fond embrace, —
 To come with love's warm kisses back to thee, —
 To show *thine* eyes thy gray-haired father's face,
 Nor Heaven itself could grant ; this may not be !

Then spread your folded wings, and leave to earth
The dust once breathing ye have mourned so long,
Till Love, new risen, owns his heavenly birth,
And sorrow's discords sweeten into song !



November
Third.

LIFE AND DEATH.

LIFE is not sweet. One day it will be sweet
To shut our eyes and die ;
Nor feel the wild-flowers blow, nor birds dart by
With flitting butterfly,
Nor grass grow long above our heads and feet,
Nor hear the happy lark that soars sky high,
Nor sigh that Spring is fleet and Summer fleet,
Nor mark the waxing wheat,
Nor know who sits in our accustomed seat.

Life is not good. One day it will be good
To die, then live again ;
To sleep meanwhile ; so not to feel the wane-
Of shrunk leaves dropping in the wood,
Nor hear the foamy lashing of the main,
Nor mark the blackened bean-fields, nor where stood
Rich ranks of golden grain
Only dead refuse stubble clothe the plain :
Asleep from risk, asleep from pain.

VOL. II. — 11

DELUSION: WHO SHALL DECLARE IT?

November

Fourth,

WELL, maybe it is delusion
 That the soul lives after death;
 But, if so, it is far the dearest
 Which the tongue of mortal saith.
 And, since so much of life's pleasure
 Is wrought of unreal things,
 I shall always hold to the riches
 Which the "dear delusion" brings.

Delusions of earth are mocking
 Wherever we mortals go,
 And finding so much unreal
 Has cost me a deal of woe.
 But the dream of Life immortal
 Will never bring me pain;
 For, when it is proven error,
 I shall count not loss nor gain.

I shall never live to know it
 If my darlings are only dust;
 And all that the weakest and wisest
 Can do is to hope and trust.
 I may reason and doubt, but ever
 They seem to speak from the sky;
 Then it seems but a cold delusion
 To dream that a soul can die.

You may shower me with dust and ashes,
You may give me a wreath of rue,
You may dream you have truth and wisdom
And I am less brave than you ;
But, still, I shall never yield it
For a thing you say or do ;
You cannot make it an error,
And I cannot make it true.

We all must wait and wonder
What the change of death will bring ;
Your sketches are skulls and cross-bones,
Which I to the winds would fling,
And picture immortal faces
Brow-girt with asphodels,
And hands which are reaching earthward
Bunches of immortelles.

But neither your wise conclusions
Nor mine, with their rainbow wings,
Can alter one jot or tittle
The eternal law of things !
Yet, ah ! in the world that this is
It were all too sad to stay,
If we could not have our fancies
Of " the Ever-so-far-away."

November
Fifth.

THE PULLEY.

WHEN God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
“Let us,” said He, “pour on him all we can :
Let the world’s riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.”

So strength first made a way ;
Then beauty flowed ; then wisdom, honor, pleasure :
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

“For if I should,” said He,
“Bestow this jewel also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts, instead of Me,
And rest in nature, not the God of nature :
So both should losers be.

“Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness :
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to My breast.”

November
Sixth.

IO VICTIS!

I SING the hymn of the conquered, who fell in the
battle of life,
The hymn of the wounded, the beaten, who died
overwhelmed in the strife ;
Not the jubilant song of the victors, for whom the
resounding acclaim
Of nations was lifted in chorus, whose brows wore the
chaplet of fame,
But the hymn of the low and the humble, the weary,
the broken in heart,
Who strove and who failed, acting bravely a silent and
desperate part ;
Whose youth bore no flower on its branches, whose
hopes burned in ashes away,
From whose hands slipped the prize they had grasped
at ; who stood at the dying of day
With the wreck of their life all around them, unpitied,
unheeded, alone,
With death swooping down o'er their failure, and all
but their faith overthrown.
While the voice of the world shouts its chorus, — its
pæan for those who have won ;
While the trumpet is sounding triumphant, and high
to the breeze and the sun
Glad banners are waving, hands clapping, and hurrying
feet

Thronging after the laurel-crowned victors, I stand on
 the field of defeat,
 In the shadow, with those who are fallen, and wounded,
 and dying, and there
 Chant a requiem low, place my hand on their pain-
 knotted brows, breathe a prayer,
 Hold the hand that is helpless, and whisper, "They
 only the victory win
 Who have fought the good fight, and have vanquished
 the demon that tempts us within ;
 Who have held to their faith unseduced by the prize
 that the world holds on high ;
 Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist,
 fight, — if need be, to die."

* * * * *



November
 Seventh.

SORROW.

UPON my lips she laid her touch divine,
 And merry speech and careless laughter died ;
 She fixed her melancholy eyes on mine,
 And would not be denied.

I saw the West-wind loose her cloudlets white,
 In flocks, careering through the April sky ;
 I could not sing, though joy was at its height,
 For she stood silent by.

I watched the lovely evening fade away, —
A mist was lightly drawn across the stars ;
She broke my quiet dream : I heard her say,
“ Behold your prison-bars !

“ Earth’s gladness shall not satisfy your soul :
This beauty of the world in which you live ;
The crowning grace that sanctifies the whole, —
That I alone can give.”

I heard, and shrank away from her afraid ;
But still she held me and would still abide.
Youth’s bounding pulses slackened and obeyed,
With slowly ebbing tide.

“ Look thou beyond the evening sky,” she said,
“ Beyond the changing splendors of the day ;
Accept the pain, the weariness, the dread,
Accept, and bid me stay !”

I turned and clasped her close with sudden strength,
And slowly, sweetly, I became aware
Within my arms God’s angel stood, at length,
White-robed, and calm and fair.

And now I look beyond the evening star,
Beyond the changing splendors of the day,
Knowing the pain He sends more precious far,
More beautiful than they.

November THE ODE OF CHANGE.

Eighth.

* * * * *

DEATH! there is not any death; only infinite
change,

Only a place of life which is novel and strange.

Change! there is naught but change and renewal of
strife,

Which make up the infinite changes we sum up in life.

Life! what is life, that it ceases with ceasing of
breath?

Death! what were life without change but an infinite
death?

* * * * *

Forever! though who shall tell in what seeming or
where?

In what far-off secret space of God's limitless air?

It matters nothing at all what we are or where set,

If a spark of the Infinite Light can shine on us yet.

Life following life forever!

* * * * *

Shall I mourn for those who are not? Nay, while
love and regret

Still linger within our souls, they live with us yet.

If we love, then the souls that we love, they exist and
they are,

As memory which makes us ourselves, brings precious
things from far,

Love lives and is forever!

November
Ninth.

AN ARTIST'S MODEL.

TURN back the picture to the wall
That gazes from the easel thus !
The hand that drew is dead, and all
Is ended, now, for all of us.
Oh, not his life alone, but mine
Goes down into his grave to-day,
As, failing of the touch divine,
My very portrait fades away.

You look askance. My portrait? Yes.
True, I have lent to many a one
His canvas saints' and sinners' dress,
But this was just myself begun.
You would not think that fresh, pure face
The same that every studio knows —
That girlish form's unconscious grace
Your model's well-considered pose?

Oh, never any one like him
Had brain and heart to feel and know !
The others painted turn of limb,
And flesh and blood's mere surface glow ;
But he, with vision swift and strong,
Pierced deep to what they could not see,
And through the web of chance and wrong,
Discerned the hidden soul of me.

I tell you, with his kind, keen eyes,
He looked straight through this accident
That men call Me, and saw me rise,
The very woman nature meant !
And in my inmost self, the while,
I felt it grow, the sweet, strange dream,
And stood beneath his quickening smile,
The marvel that he made me seem !

Oh, might I once have seen complete
This miracle I measured by,
Prostrate before the spotless feet
Of this that was and was not I,
I could have wept such tears as wear
The stained soul white and leave it free,
And risen a new creature there,
And been — what I shall never be !

Turn back the picture to the wall,
And bury the dead painter now,
And let me walk behind them all,
That mourner chief of all should bow :
For who can see, like such a one,
The self-same coffin shut within,
Beside the life untimely done
The life that never shall begin ?

And yet if any truth there be
In worlds that make amends for this,
Then Heaven perhaps will pity me
For all that earth has let me miss ;
And I shall find his face again,
And know the rest. Farewell, my Fate,
Until we meet ! ' If never — then —
Farewell to all I learn too late !



November
Tenth.

BE STRONG.

BE strong !
Not long
The day of life will last ;
And when it all is past,
And thou art gone to rest,
'T is surely for the best
To leave
At eve
A glorious train of light
To be some hearts' delight ;
Just as the summer sun,
When the long day is done,
Leaves twilight's golden glory
To end the short sweet story.
So shall our life of duty
Shine after us in beauty ;
Our memory shame the wrong,
Our strength make others strong.

THE EVERLASTING MEMORIAL.

November

Eleventh.

UP and away, like the dew of the morning,
Soaring from earth to its home in the sun,
So let me steal away, gently and lovingly,
Only remembered by what I have done.

My name, and my place, and my tomb all forgotten,
The brief race of time well and patiently run,
So let me pass away, peacefully, silently,
Only remembered by what I have done.

Gladly away from this toil would I hasten,
Up to the crown that for me has been won ;
Unthought of by man in rewards or in praises, —
Only remembered by what I have done.

Up and away, like the odors of sunset,
That sweeten the twilight as darkness comes on :
So be my life, — a thing felt but not noticed, —
And I but remembered by what I have done.

Yes, like the fragrance that wanders in freshness,
When the flowers that it came from are closed up
and gone ;
So would I be to this world's weary dwellers,
Only remembered by what I have done.

Needs there the praise of the love-written record,
The name and the epitaph graved on the stone?
The things we have lived for, let them be our story,
We ourselves but remembered by what we have done.

I need not be missed ; if my life has been bearing
(As its summer and autumn moved silently on)
The bloom, and the fruit, and the seed of its season,
I shall still be remembered by what I have done.

I need not be missed, if another succeed me
To reap down those fields which in Spring I have
sown ;
He who ploughed and who sowed is not missed by the
reaper,
He is only remembered by what he has done.

Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken ;
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages, — all about me forgotten
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done.

So let my living be, so be my dying ;
So let my name lie, unblazoned, unknown ;
Unpraised and unmissed, I shall still be remembered :
Yes, — but remembered by what I have done.

November
Twelfth.

SLEEP.

HE sees when their footsteps falter, when their
heart grows weak and faint ;
He marks when their strength is failing, and listens to
each complaint ;
He bids them rest for a season, for the pathway has
grown too steep ;
And, folded in fair green pastures,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

Like weary and worn-out children, that sigh for the
daylight's close,
He knows that they oft are longing for home and its
sweet repose ;
So He calls them in from their labors ere the shadows
around them creep,
And, silently watching o'er them,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

He giveth it, oh, so gently ! as a mother will hush to
rest
The babe that she softly pillows so tenderly on her
breast ;
Forgotten now are the trials and sorrows that made
them weep,
For with many a soothing promise
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

He giveth it? friends the dearest can never this boon
bestow ;
But He touches the drooping eyelids, and placid the
features grow ;
Their foes may gather around them, and storms may
round them sweep,
But, guarding them safe from danger,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

All dread of the distant future, all fears that oppress
to-day,
Like mists that clear in the sunlight, have noiselessly
passed away ;
Nor call nor clamor can rouse them from slumbers so
pure and deep,
For only His voice can reach them
Who giveth His loved ones sleep.

Weep not that their toils are over, weep not that their
race is run ;
God grant we may rest as calmly when our work, like
theirs, is done !
Till then we would yield with gladness our treasures
to Him to keep, .
And rejoice in the sweet assurance,
He giveth His loved ones sleep.

November
Thirteenth.

HE LEADS US ON.

HE leads us on
By paths we did not know.
Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow,
Though oft we faint and falter on the way
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day,
Yet when the clouds are gone
We know He leads us on.

He leads us on
Through all the unquiet years ;
Past all our dreamland hopes, and doubts, and fears
He guides our steps. Through all the tangled maze
Of sin, of sorrow, and o'erclouded days
We know His will is done ;
And still He leads us on.

And He at last,
After the weary strife,
After the restless fever we call life,
After the dreariness, the aching pain,
The wayward struggles which have proved in vain,
After our toils are past,
Will give us rest at last.

I YIELD THEE UNTO HIGHER SPHERES.

November
Fourteenth.

TO J. S.

I YIELD thee unto higher spheres, .
I bend my head and say, "Thy will,
Not mine be done," though bitter tears
The while my eyelids fill.

I know thou hast escaped the blight
That wilts us here, and entered now
To perfect day, — though in the night
Bereft of thee we bow.

And yet thy little sunny life
Was beautiful as it was brief:
It was not vexed by pain or strife,
It knew but little grief.

The sunshine from our house is gone,
And from our hearts their peace and joy;
We feel so terribly alone
Without thee — Dearest Boy!

Thou mad'st us feel how very fair
God's earth could be, and taught us Love;
And in life's tapestry of care
A golden figure wove.

VOL. II. — 12

Brave as we will our hearts to bear,
 Grief will not wholly be denied ;
 The ineffectual dikes we rear
 Go down before its tide.

We lie all prostrate, — cannot feel
 God's Love, — we only cry aloud,
 "O God, O God !" for all things reel,
 And God hides in a cloud.

We blindly wail, for we are maimed
 Beyond repair, until at last
 He lifts us up, all bleeding, lamed,
 And shattered by the blast.

He asks, "And would you wish him back,
 Whom I have taken to My joy, —
 Drag downward to life's narrow track
 Your little spirit boy?"

"No ! no !" the spirit makes reply :
 "Not back to earthly chance and pain."
 "Yet, ah !" the shattered senses cry,
 "Would he were here again !"

He was so meshed within our love
 That all our heart-strings bleeding lie,
 And all fond hopes we round him wove
 Are now but agony.

Yet let us suffer — he is freed,
And on our tears a bridge of light .
Is built by God, his steps to lead
To joys beyond our sight.

— ♦ —

THE DEPARTURE OF THE SWALLOW.

November
Fifteenth,

AND is the swallow gone?
Who beheld it?
Which way sail'd it?
Farewell bade it none?

No mortal saw it go :
But who doth hear
Its summer cheer
As it flitteth to and fro?

So the freed spirit flies !
From its surrounding clay
It steals away
Like the swallow from the skies.

Whither? wherefore doth it go?
'T is all unknown :
We feel alone
That a void is left below.

November
Sixteenth.

AKOSMISM.

AS one who to some long-locked chamber goes,
And listens there to what the dead have said,
So are there moments when my thoughts are led
To those dull chronicles whose pages close
Epochs and ages in the same repose
That shall the future, as the past, o'erspread :
And where but memory may tend the dead,
Or prune the ivy where once grew the rose, —
And as there to me from their pages streams
The incoherent story of the years,
The aimlessness of all we undertake,
I think our lives are surely but the dreams
Of spirits dwelling in the distant spheres,
Who, as we die, do one by one awake.

— ♦ —

November
Seventeenth.

TO BE DEAD.

WHAT is it to be dead? I think that I,
When I am dead, shall know no more of pain ;
Shall still be glad in sunshine or in rain ;
May, at my mood, unto the ones who lie
Fast bound in sleep and whom I love, draw nigh
And nestle close, and kiss and kiss again
The sweet pink lips ; or when the sunbeams wane

And soft stars shine serenely in the sky,
With veiling vapors o'er my spirit face,
And feet in silence shod, I may as now
Glide through the rooms where my small work was
done.

And those who sit within that haunted place
Shall say, "How near to us he is!" And how
The dear, sad souls will long to see the sun!



November
Eighteenth.

COMFORT.

IF there should come a time, as well there may,
When sudden tribulation smites thine heart,
And thou dost come to me for help and stay,
And comfort, how shall I perform my part?
How shall I make my heart a resting-place,
A shelter safe for thee when terrors smite?
How shall I bring the sunshine to thy face,
And dry thy tears in bitter woe's despite?
How shall I win the strength to keep my voice
Steady and firm, although I hear thy sobs?
How shall I bid thy fainting soul rejoice,
Nor mar the counsel of mine own heart-throbs?
Love, My Love, teaches me a certain way;
So, if thy dark hour come, I am thy stay!

BEREAVEMENT, CONSOLATION,
November SUBSTITUTION.
Nineteenth.

BEREAVEMENT.

WHEN some Beloveds, 'neath those eyelids lay
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,
And I astonished fell, and could not pray,
A thought within me to myself did say,
"Is God less God that *thou* art left undone?
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,
As in that purple!" — But I answered, Nay!
What child his filial heart in words can loose,
If he behold his tender father raise
The hand that chastens sorely? Can he choose
But sob in silence with an upward gaze? —
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns, in speechless tears, both prayer and praise.

CONSOLATION.

ALL are not taken! there are left behind
Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring,
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so — if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,

Where "dust to dust" the love from life disjoined —
And if before those sepulchres unmoving
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
Crying "Where are ye, O my loved and loving?"
I know a Voice would sound, "Daughter, I AM.
Can I suffice for Heaven, and not for earth?"

SUBSTITUTION.

WHEN some belovèd voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new —
What hope? what help? what music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh;
Not reason's subtle count! Not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, — nor the angels' sweet All-hails,
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these.
Speak THOU, availing Christ! — and fill this pause.

November THE DEPARTED CHILD.
Twentieth.

I CANNOT make him dead !
 His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study-chair ;
 Yet when my eyes, now dim
 With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes — he is not there !

 I know his face is hid
 Under the coffin-lid ;
Closed are his eyes ; cold is his forehead fair :
 My hand that marble felt ;
 O'er it in prayer I knelt ;
Yet my heart whispers that — he is not there !

 I cannot make him dead !
 When passing by the bed,
So long watched over with parental care,
 My spirit and my eye
 Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that — he is not there !

 When, at the cool gray break
 Of day, from sleep I wake,
With my first breathing of the morning air
 My soul goes up with joy
 To Him who gave my boy ;
Then comes the sad thought that — he is not there !

When, at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I 'm with his mother offering up our prayer,
Or evening anthems tuning,
In spirit I 'm communing
With our boy's spirit, though — he is not there !

Not there ! — where, then, is he ?
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that he used to wear ;
The grave that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress
Is but his wardrobe locked — he is not there !

He lives ! — in all the past
He lives ; nor to the last
Of seeing him again will I despair.
In dreams I see him now ;
And on his angel brow
I see it written, — “ Thou shalt see me there ! ”

Yes, we all live to God !
Father, Thy chastening rod
So help us, Thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That, in the Spirit-land,
Meeting at Thy right hand,
'T will be our Heaven to find that — he is there !

November A MARRIAGE HYMN. .
Twenty-First.

“FROM henceforth no more twain, but one,”
Yet ever one through being twain,

As self is ever lost and won

Through love's own ceaseless loss and gain ;
And both their full perfection reach,
Each growing the full self through each.

Two in all worship, glad and high,

All promises to praise and prayer,

“Where two are gathered, there am I ;”

Gone half the weight from all ye bear,
Gained twice the force of all ye do, —
The ceaseless, sacred church of two.

One in all lowly ministry,

One in all priestly sacrifice,

Through Love, which makes all service free,

And finds or makes all gifts of price,
All love which made life rich before,
Through this great central Love grown more.

And so, together journeying on

To the great bridal of the Christ,

When all the life His Love has won

To perfect Love is sacrificed,

And the new song beyond the sun

Peals, “Henceforth no more twain, but one.”

And in that perfect marriage day
All earth's lost love shall live once more ;
All lack and loss shall pass away,
And all find all not found before ;
Till all the worlds shall live and glow
In that great Love's great overflow.

November
Twenty-Second.

IN MEMORY.

AH ! fair face gone from sight,
With all in light
Of eyes, that pierced the deep
Of human night !
Ah ! fair face calm in sleep !

Ah ! fair lips hushed in death !
Now their glad breath
Breathes not upon our air
Music, that saith
Love only, and things fair.

Ah ! lost brother ! Ah ! sweet
Still hands and feet !
May those feet haste to reach,
Those hands to greet,
Us, where Love needs no speech.

November FOLDED HANDS.
~~Twenty-Third.~~

PALE, withered hands that more than fourscore
years

Had wrought for others ; soothed the hurt of tears,
Rocked children's cradles, eased the fever's smart,
Dropped soothing balm in many an aching heart,
Now stirless folded, like wan rose-leaves pressed,
Above the snow and silence of her breast.

In mute appeal they tell of labors done
And well-earned rest that came with set of sun.
From the worn brow the lines of care are swept,
As if an angel's kiss the while she slept
Had smoothed the cobweb wrinkles quite away
And given back the peace of childhood's day.
A smile is on the lips as if she said :

"None know life's secret save the happy dead."

So, gazing where she lies, we know that pain
And parting cannot cleave her soul again.
And we are sure that they who saw her last
In that dim vista which we call the past,
Who never knew her old and weary-eyed,
Remembering best the maiden and the bride,
Have sprung to greet her with the olden speech,
The dear, sweet names no later love can teach,
And "Welcome Home" they cried, and grasped her
hands, —

So dwells the Mother in the best of lands.

November
Twenty-Fourth.

THE FUTURE.

WHAT may we take into that vast forever?
That marble door
Admits no fruit of all our long endeavor,
No fame-wreathed crown we wore,
No garnered lore.

What can we bear beyond the unknown portal?
No gold, no gains
Of all our toiling ; in the Life immortal
No hoarded wealth remains,
Nor gilds nor stains.

Naked from out that far abyss behind us
We entered here ;
No word came with our coming to remind us
What wondrous world was near,
No hope, no fear.

Into the silent, starless night before us,
Naked we glide.
No hand has mapped the constellations o'er us,
No comrade at our side,
No chart, no guide.

Yet fearless toward that midnight black and hollow,
Our footsteps fare ;
The beckoning of a Father's hand we follow, —
His Love alone is there,
No curse, no care.

November
Twenty-fifth.

LIFE IN DEATH.

NEW being is from being ceased ;
No life is but by death ;
Something 's expiring everywhere
To give some other breath.

There 's not a flower that glads the Spring
But blooms upon the grave
Of its dead parent seed, o'er which
Its forms of beauty wave.

The oak that, like an ancient tower,
Stands massive on the heath,
Looks out upon a living world,
But strikes its roots in death.

The cattle on a thousand hills
Clip the sweet herbs that grow
Rank from the soil enriched by herds
Sleeping long years below.

To-day is but a structure built
Upon dead yesterday ;
And progress hews her temple-stones
From wrecks of old decay.

Then mourn not death ; 't is but a stair
Built with divinest art,
Up which the deathless footsteps climb
Of loved ones who depart.

November
Twenty-Sixth.

UNBELIEF.

THERE is no unbelief:
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.

Whoever says when clouds are in the sky,
"Be patient, Heart; light breaketh by and by,"
Trusts the Most High.

Whoever sees 'neath winter's field of snow
The silent harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.

Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows God will keep.

Whoever says "To-morrow," "The Unknown,"
"The Future," trusts that Power alone
He dares disown.

The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,
And dared to live when life has only woes,
God's comfort knows.

There is no unbelief;
And day by day, and night, unconsciously,
The heart lives by that faith the lips deny —
God knoweth why.

EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

November
Twenty-Seventh.

WITHIN her downy cradle there lay a little
child,
And a group of hovering angels unseen upon her
smiled ;
When a strife arose among them, a loving, holy strife,
Which should shed the richest blessing over the new-
born Life.

One breathed upon her features, and the babe in
beauty grew,
With a cheek like morning's blushes, and an eye of
azure hue ;
Till every one who saw her was thankful for the
sight
Of a face so sweet and radiant with ever-fresh delight.

Another gave her accents, and a voice as musical
As a spring-bird's joyous carol, or a rippling stream-
let's fall ;
Till all who heard her laughing, or her words of
childish grace,
Loved as much to listen to her, as to look upon her
face.

Another brought from Heaven a clear and gentle
mind,
And within the lovely casket the precious gem en-
shrined ;
Till all who knew her wondered that God should be
so good
As to bless with such a spirit a world so cold and
rude.

Thus did she grow in beauty, in melody, and truth,
The budding of her childhood just opening into
youth ;
And to our hearts yet dearer every moment than be-
fore
She became, though we thought fondly heart could
not love her more.

Then out spake another angel, nobler, brighter than
the rest,
As with strong arm, but tender, he caught her to his
breast :
“Ye have made her all too lovely for a child of
mortal race,
But no shade of human sorrow shall darken o’er her
face ;

“Ye have tuned to gladness only the accents of her
tongue,
And no wail of human anguish shall from her lips be
wrung ;
Nor shall the soul that shineth so purely from within
Her form of earth-born frailty ever know a sense of
sin.

“Lulled in my faithful bosom, I will bear her far
away,
Where there is no sin, nor anguish, nor sorrow, nor
decay ;
And mine a boon more glorious than all your gifts
shall be —
Lo ! I crown her happy spirit with Immortality !”
Then on his heart Our Darling yielded up her gentle
breath,
For the stronger, brighter angel, who loved her best,
was — Death !



November NIGHT AND DEATH.
~~Twenty-Eighth.~~

MYSTERIOUS Night ! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue ?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,

And lo ! creation widened in man's view.
 Who could have though such darkness lay concealed
 Within thy beams, O sun ! or who could find,
 Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
 That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind !
 Why do we then shun death with anxious strife ?
 If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life ?



I THOUGHT OUR LOVE AT FULL.

November

Twenty-Ninth.

I THOUGHT our Love at full, but I did err ;
 Joy's wreath drooped o'er mine eyes ; I could
 not see

That sorrow in our happy world must be
 Love's deepest spokesman and interpreter ;
 But, as a mother feels her child first stir
 Under her heart, so felt I instantly
 Deep in my soul another bond to thee
 Thrill with that life we saw depart from her ;
 O Mother of our angel-child ! twice dear !
 Death knits as well as parts, and still, I wis,
 Her tender radiance shall infold us here,
 Even as the light, borne up by inward bliss,
 Threads the void glooms of space without a fear,
 To print on farthest stars her pitying kiss.

November SONNETS IN SHADOW.

Thirtieth.

THOUGH faith be dead, yet will our hope outrun
Even the grave's doubt with triumphant might,
To reach some Devacham forever bright
Where all earth's wrong and anguish are undone ;
Where as some awful star, dual though one, —
Two throbbing heart-fires in one sphere of light, —
Does soul with soul belovèd so unite
As they had ne'er been two since time begun.
What were the clasp of hand by hand, of eye
The glance to eye, even of lip on lip
The holy rapture, with such bliss to vie?
Ah, though this be illusion fate will strip
Full soon, an hour it lifts us to the sky,
And with the gods gives us full fellowship !

Yet loss were double loss did we forget.

Who once has loved begrudges not to pay,
Since needs must be, with ache of heart away,
For Love's divine ; and thus the seal is set
That marks his passion true. The sun lives yet,
When night's black ruin has overwhelmed the
day ;
And death, which claims the loved one, cannot
slay
Love, the immortal. Are not our eyes wet?

If we no longer loved, why should we weep?
 Since still we love, we bless that memory
 Which makes Love possible and strong and deep.
 Bitter the fruit we pluck from memory's tree,
 And yet its acrid husks a kernel keep
 Sweeter than honey of Hymettian bee.

How can we call this Love which selfishly
 Mourns its own pain? Surely, if love were true,
 So would it fill the soul as to undo
 All thought of self, how sharp soe'er pain be.
 How fares it with our dear loved dead, while we
 Are torn with anguish? Do they suffer too,
 Thus to be parted? Does each morn anew
 Wake them to sorrow fresh; each even see
 Them faint with separation's pain intense?
 How poor is love, when baffled thus we moan
 And reach them not, even by subtlest sense;
 And poorer far, when our own woe alone
 Stifles the heart into indifference,
 Forgets to shudder at their griefs unknown.

When souls new-born in darkness of the tomb
 Soar up ethereal into loftier spheres,
 It scarce can be that earthly hopes and fears
 Cheer them or cumber longer. Though our doom
 Keep us intent on shadows in life's gloom,
 To them the light of truth in glory nears.
 That still our souls and theirs may walk as peers

That glow immortal must our sight illumine.
Let us no more watch phantoms ; on the fleet,
 Vain shows of life no longer fix our eyes.
Toward eternal truth be set our feet,
Until to theirs our lofty pathway rise ;
 For spirit-pure companionship be meet,
And hold our way with theirs along the skies.

December.

*This, My Love, is the month Thou first saw light,—
The light of this world. Gone were the flowers,
And all things of earth white-robed were cheerless,
For Death had laid her hand on Nature's face.
'Twas then Thy white soul came in mortal form.
The angels' Christmas song had hardly ceased;
A star, Thy star and mine, its light increased,—
And there was Love on earth, unknown before.
Then melted the snows, then the flowers bloomed,
And sweet were the songs of birds, while Nature
Smiled, nay, all the world smiled, not knowing why—
But I knew why, waiting Thy sweet coming,
As I lay on my Mother's breast sleeping.*

December **THE GUIDING HAND.**
First.

IS this the way, my Father? — 'Tis, My Child.
Thou must pass through this tangled, dreary wild,
If thou wouldst reach the city undefiled,—
Thy peaceful home above.

But enemies are round. — Yes, Child, I know
That where thou least expectest thou 'lt find a foe ;
But victor thou shalt prove o'er all below,
Only seek strength above.

My Father, it is dark. — Child, take My hand,
Cling close to Me ; I 'll lead thee through the land ;
Trust My all-seeking care, so shalt thou stand
'Midst glory bright above.

My footsteps seem to slide. — Child, only raise
Thine eye to Me ; then in these slippery ways
I will hold up thy goings ; thou shalt praise
Me for each step above.

O Father, I am weary. — Lean thy head
Upon My breast. It was My Love that spread
Thy rugged path ; hope on, till I have said :
“ Now come and rest above.”

UNTIL I SAW HER DEAD.

December

Second.

I COULD not think what gave her that fine beauty,
 Until I saw her dead ; for in her face
 There was no line a sculptor would have prized ;
 And yet methought all Heaven was in that face !
 I could not look into it and retain
 A single hold of earth ; and when I gazed
 Within her eyes, they drank out all my soul,
 And left me as a statue, with the gleam
 Of adoration in its stony front.

* * * * *

If that still form was hers, it was not *her*.
 Yet through her frame there ran a wondrous speech
 E'en when she spoke no word. External things
 Leapt eagerly into her centring breast,
 And came again all dripping with the dew
 Of her new thought. And when she spoke, it seem'd
 The utterance of a company of minds,
 That even in condemnation gives support
 To that which is condemn'd. Most erring souls,
 When they approach'd her, could not hold their sins,
 But, child-like, blabb'd them out, and came away
 Ennobled and amazed to find what good
 Sprang up when she took off their loads of sin.

December
Third.

AFTER YEARS.

“GIVE back my child !” I plead that day,
My face against the coffin-lid.
“Here is the place, upon my breast ;
Not there, in cold and darkness hid.
Why, he had just begun to live, —
To know my face, to laugh, to reach
His hands to meet my lips, and make
Sweet essays at some unknown speech !

“Untrodden round his baby feet
The whole fair realm of childhood lay ;
Nor stones nor thorns to make them bleed, —
My hand had smoothed them all away.
No wind of heaven had buffeted
His sunny head with cruel breath, —
My arms had safely sheltered him.
Give him to me, O Death !”

Now standing by that little grave,
Where in and out the passing years
Weave tapestries of green and gold,
I smile, remembering my tears.
I lay my gray head on the mound
That drank my tears, and 'neath my breath
I whisper : “It is better so !
Keep him, O gentle Death !”

ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND.

December
Fourth.

I 'M not where I was yesterday,
Though my home be still the same ;
For I have lost the veriest friend
Whom ever a friend could name ;
I 'm not what I was yesterday,
Though change there be little to see,
For a part of myself has lapsed away
From time to eternity.

I have lost a thought, that many a year
Was most familiar food
To my inmost mind, by night or day,
In merry or plaintive mood ;
I have lost a hope, that many a year
Looked far on a gleaming way, —
When the walls of life were closing round,
When the sky was sombre gray.

For long, too long, in distant climes
My lot was cast, and then
A frail and casual intercourse
Was all I had with men ;
But lonely in distant climes
I was well content to roam,
And felt no void, for my heart was full
Of the friend it had left at home.

And now I was close to my native shore,
And I felt him at my side ;
His spirit was in that homeward wind,
His voice in that homeward tide.
For what were to me my native shores,
But that they held the scene
Where my youth's most genial flowers had blown,
And affection's root had been ?

I thought, how should I see him first,
How should our hands first meet ;
Within his room, — upon the stair, —
At the corner of the street ?
I thought where should I hear him first,
How catch his greeting tone ? —
And thus I went up to his door,
And they told me he was gone !

Oh, what is life but a sum of love,
And death but to lose it all !
Weeds be for those that are left behind,
And not for those that fall.
And now how mighty a sum of love
Is lost forever for me !
No, I'm not what I was yesterday,
Though change there be little to see.

WHAT A DEAD MAN SAID.

December
Fifth.

HEAR what a dead man said to me.

His lips moved not, and the eyelids lay
Shut, as the leaves of a white rose may
Ere the wan bud blooms out perfectly ;
And the lifeless hands they were stiffly crossed,
As they always cross them, over the breast,
When the soul goes nude and the corpse is dressed ;
And over the form, in its long sleep lost, —
From forehead down to the pointed feet
That peaked the foot of the winding-sheet, —
Pallid patience and perfect rest.
It was the voice of a dream, maybe,
But it seemed that the dead man said to me : —

“ I, indeed, am the man that died
Yesternight — and you weep for this ;
But, lo ! I am with you, side by side,
As we have walked when the summer sun
Made the smiles of our faces one,
And touched our lips with the same warm kiss.
Do not doubt that I tell you true, —
I am the man you once called friend,
And caught my hand when I came to you,
And loosed it only because the end
Of the path I walked of a sudden stopped —
And a dead man's hand must needs be dropped —

And I — though it 's strange to think so now —
I have wept, as you weep for me,
And pressed hot palms to my aching brow,
And moaned through the long night ceaselessly ;
Yet have I lived to forget my pain,
As you will live to be glad again, —
Though never so glad as this hour am I,
Tasting a rapture of delight
Vast as the Heavens are infinite,
And dear as the hour I came to die.
Living and loving, I dreamed my cup
Brimmed sometimes, and with marvellings
I have lifted and tipped it up
And drank to the dregs of all sweet things.
Living, 't was but dream of bliss —
Now I realize all it is ;
And now my only shadow of grief
Is that I may not give relief
Unto those living and dreaming on,
And woo them graveward, as I have gone,
And show death's loveliness, — for they
Shudder and shrink as they walk this way,
Never dreaming that all they dread
Is their purest delight when dead."

Thus it was, or seemed to be,
That the voice of the dead man spoke to me.

December
Sixth.

THE FLOWN SOUL.

COME not again ! I dwell with you
Above the realm of frost and dew,
Of pain and fire, and growth to death.
I dwell with you where never breath
Is drawn, but fragrance vital flows
From life to life, even as a rose
Unseen pours sweetness through each vein
And from the air distils again.
You are my rose unseen ; we live
Where each to other joy may give
In ways untold, by means unknown
And secret as the magnet-stone.
For which of us, indeed, is dead ?
No more I lean to kiss your head —
The gold-red hair so thick upon it ;
Joy feels no more the touch that won it ;
When o'er my brow your pearl-cool palm
In tenderness so childish, calm,
Crept softly, once. Yet, see, my arm
Is strong, and still my blood runs warm ;
I still can work, and think, and weep.
But all this show of life I keep
Is but the shadow of your shine,
Flicker of your fire, husk of your vine ;
Therefore, you are not dead, nor I
Who hear your laughter's minstrelsy.

Among the stars your feet are set ;
 Your little feet are dancing yet
 Their rhythmic beat, as when on earth.
 So swift, so slight, are death and birth !
 Come not again, dear child. If thou
 By any chance couldst break that vow
 Of silence at thy last hour made ;
 If to this grim life unafraid
 Thou couldst return, and melt the frost
 Wherein thy bright limbs' power was lost ;
 Still would I whisper — since so fair
 This silent comradeship we share —
 Yes, whisper 'mid the unbidden rain
 Of tears : " Come not, come not again ! "



THE WAY THE BABY SLEPT.

December
 Seventh.

THIS is the way the Baby slept :
 A mist of tresses backward thrown
 By quavering sighs where kisses crept
 With yearnings she had never known ;
 The little hands were closely kept
 About a lily newly blown, —
 And God was with her. And we wept, —
 And this is the way the Baby slept.

VOL. II. — 14

THE LONELY LANDSCAPE.

December
Eighth.

THE place again —

The wooded heights, the widening plain,
The whispered pines, the dry-leaved oaks, too young
To cast their dead dreams ere the new be sprung !

What profits it

Alone on this prone slope to sit,
Where thou didst press the heath, and see how dun
The landscape seems, lit only by the sun ?

Yet, ah ! not vain

To visit thy fair haunts again —
To trace thy footsteps by the upturned stone,
And conjure back thy looks, thy words, thy tone !

Like music fine

That simple-seeming speech of thine
Hath in its soft harmonics only heard
When from the memory fades the uttered word.

And to mine eyes,

Undazzled by thyself, doth rise
An image lovelier and more like to thee
Than even thy bodily self which sight can see.

Ah ! the wind shakes

The withered leaves, and Love awakes,
And to the vacant landscape cries in vain :
“ Ah, Heaven ! to have her at my side again ! ”

December
Ninth.

THE TRANSITION.

WHEN daylight fades, and night returns,
Bringing to weary hearts repose,
How sweet to lay the head at rest,
And the tired eyelids close ;
Cast off the garments of the day,
And let the earth-stains fade away ;
And wake refreshed with quiet sleep,
When morning's light breaks o'er the deep !

So let it be when death is near,
Bringing to weary hearts release.
How sweet to lay the head at rest,
When angels whisper, " Peace ; "
Cast off the garments of the clay,
And let the earth-stains fade away ;
And wake refreshed from that last sleep,
Like childhood from its slumbers deep !

We fear not what to-morrow brings ;
Its prophecy to-day is spoken ;
And life begins, when morning dawns,
With current still unbroken.
The thoughts, the hopes of yesterday
Renew their flight again to-day,
Like birds that seek the North in Spring,
Resting to rise with strengthened wing.

Thus life's to-morrow, Heaven, will be
 The flower whose bud was folded here,
 The gradual opening of the day,
 The rounding of the sphere.
 By fine gradations journeying on,
 From light to light, from zone to zone,
 We, as the future opens wide,
 New prospects greet on every side.

And day by day, from state to state,
 By gentlest growth the soul will rise :
 No sudden shock will mar the peace
 And splendor of the skies.
 As childhood into manhood rose,
 The angel from the human grows ;
 And all that Love has planted here
 Ripens to perfect beauty there.



December
 Tenth.

PRAYER IN SLEEP.

I SAW our Darling in my dreams ;
 As patient, weak, and frail
 As in those sweet last days, before
 She passed beyond the veil.

And with an anxious questioning
 I thought of all the care,
 The heavy burden of our life
 God giveth us to bear.

How can her feebleness sustain
This last new stroke of grief ?
The storm she dreaded breaks at last ;
God send her soul relief !

So fervently I prayed for her,
That God would guard and keep
Her dear heart from the touch of woe,—
It woke me from my sleep !

Then I remembered she was gone ;
I knew she was in Heaven,
Beyond the shadow of the cloud
That o'er our sky hath driven.

No anxious care need wake for her,
No grief, no fear, no prayer ;
There is no trouble that can reach
Her gentle spirit there.

Thank God, who took her safely home
Before this sorrow fell !
It loses half its sting for us,
Since she is shielded well.

No wish that love can frame for her,
Nor heart's most full request
But God hath granted. In her peace,
Heaven's peace, let love find rest.

December
Eleventh.

FRANCIE.

I LOVED a child as we should love
Each other everywhere ;
I cared more for his happiness
Than I dreaded my own despair.
An angel asked me to give him
My whole life's dearest cost ;
And in adding mine to his treasures
I knew they could never be lost.
To his heart I gave the gold,
Though little my own had known ;
To his eyes what tenderness
From youth in mine had grown ;
I gave him all my buoyant
Hope for my future years ;
I gave him whatever melody
My voice had steeped in tears.
Upon the shore of darkness
His drifted body lies.
He is dead, and I stand beside him,
With his beauty in my eyes.
I am like those withered petals
We see on a winter day,
That gladly gave their color
In the happy summer away.

I am glad I lavished my worthiest
 To fashion his greater worth ;
 Since he will live in Heaven,
 I shall lie content in the earth.



THE UNKNOWN MUSIC.

December
 Twelfth.

'T IS said in dying one can often hear,
 Ere the soul goes,
 Faint melodies that ever come more near ;
 But no one knows.

A murmuring, soothing, lulling, lingering sound,
 A holy song
 From the far worlds that we have never found,
 Though seeking long.

Just as the perfume fills a lonely flower
 In the wood's shade,
 Ethereal harmonies at the parting hour
 The soul pervade.

It may be echoes of the angels' speech —
 But no one knows —
 A far, sweet music out of mortal reach,
 Till the soul goes.

December
Thirteenth.

TRUST.

I CANNOT see, with my small human sight,
Why God should lead this way or that for me ;
I only know He saith, " Child, follow Me ; "
But I can trust.

I know not why my path should be at times
So straitly hedged, so strongly barred before ;
I only know God could keep wide the door ;
But I can trust.

I find no answer, often, when beset
With questions fierce and subtle on my way,
And often have but strength to faintly pray ;
But I can trust.

I often wonder, as with trembling hand
I cast the seed along the furrowed ground,
If ripened fruit will be found ;
But I can trust.

I cannot know why suddenly the storm
Should rage so fiercely round me in its wrath ;
But this I know — God watches all my path,
And I can trust.

I may not draw aside the mystic veil
That hides the unknown future from my sight ;
Nor know if for me waits the dark or light ;
But I can trust.

I have no power to look across the tide,
To see, while here, the land beyond the river ;
But this I know, I shall be God's forever ;
So I can trust.

—♦—

ACROSS THE WORLD I SPEAK TO THEE.

December

Fourteenth.

ACROSS the world I speak to thee ;
Where'er thou art (I know not where),
Send thou a messenger to me !

I here remain, who would be free,
To seek thee out through foul or fair,
Across the world I speak to thee.

Whether beneath the tropic tree,
The cooling night-wind fans thy hair, —
Send thou a messenger to me !

Whether upon the rushing sea,
A foaming track thy keel doth wear, —
Across the world I speak to thee.

Whether in yonder star thou be,
A spirit loosed in purple air, —
Send thou a messenger to me !

Hath Heaven not left thee memory
Of what was well in mortal's share ?
Across the world I speak to thee ;
Send thou a messenger to me !

December
Fifteenth.

SILENT SOUNDS.

YOU do not hear it? unto me
The sweet low sound comes ceaselessly
And, floating, floods the earth and sky
With tender tone.
You do not hear the restless beat
Upon the floor, of childish feet;
Of feet that tread the flowery street
Of Heaven alone.

At morn, at noon, at eve, at night,
I hear the patter soft and light,
And catch the gust of wings snow-white,
About my door.
And on the silent air is borne
The voice that from my world was borne
That left me comfortless, to mourn
Forevermore.

Sometimes floats up from out the street
The boyish laughter, birdlike, sweet.
I turn, forgetfully to greet
My Darling fair;
Soft as the ripple of the stream,
Breeze-kissed beneath the moon's pale beam,
How strangely real it doth seem!
And he not there.

Ah, no ; you cannot hear his call ;
 You catch no laugh, no light footfall ;
 I am his Mother — that is all ;
 And He who said,
 “ I will not leave thee desolate,”
 Has, somehow, loosed the bonds of fate
 And left ajar the golden gate
 Which hides my dead.



December
 Sixteenth.

DEATH.

MY fears were more than the reality ;
 The silence, the sealed lip, the sunken eye,
 The hueless, frozen cheek, the forehead cold, —
 These were what I had dreaded to behold ;
 But when the shroud was lifted, in mute awe
 I saw not these, and yet the dead I saw ;
 But the still aspect where no trace of care
 Now lingered, all so shadowless and fair,
 And the deep silence, and the dreamless ease,
 The quiet of an unimagined peace,
 The holy calm, without or pulse or breath,
 Revealed the presence of benigonest death, —
 God's great white angel of the tranquil mien
 That brooded there with shadowy wing serene.

THE LIGHT WITHIN THE DARK.

December
Seventeenth.

WE think of heavenly bliss, and cast our eyes
Amid yon white curl'd clouds and sun-bright
air ;

And, last within the softness of the skies,
Cry, surely Heaven is there !

And yet you tell us that yon ambient light
Is but delusion, that, beyond our bound
Of atmosphere, all is perpetual night,
Silence and dark profound.

Where shall immortal spirits find their home
Of light and beauty, if yon azure arc
Be an illusion, and beyond that dome,
Unfathomable dark ?

I close my lids in slumber, and thus make
My world a dungeon, shorn of the blessed beams ;
But soon I cross the bar of sleep, and wake
Into the light of dreams.

And so there is within the night of space
An inward day, unseen by mortal eye ;
That day to reach, its mysteries to trace,
We only need to die.

December
Eighteenth.

A REVERIE.

O TENDER love of long ago,
O buried love, so near me still
On tides of thought that ebb and flow,
Beyond the empire of the will ;
To-night with mingled joy and pain
I fold thee to my heart again.

And down the meadows, Dear, we stray,
And under woods still clothed in green,
Though many Springs have passed away
And many harvests there have been,
Since through the youth-enchanted land
We wandered idly hand in hand.

Then every brook was loud with song,
And every tree was stirred with love,
And every breeze that passed along
Was like the breath of God above ;
And now to-night we go the ways
We went in those sweet summer days.

Dear Love, thy dark and earnest eyes
Look up as tender as of yore,
And, purer than the evening skies,
Thy cheeks have still the rose they wore ;
I — I have changed, but thou art fair
And fresh as in life's morning air.

What little hands these were to chain
 So many years a wayward heart ;
 What a slight girlish form to reign
 As queen upon a throne apart,
 In a man's thought, through hopes and fears,
 And all the changes of the years.

Dear Girl, behold thy Boy is now
 A man and grown to middle age,
 The lines are deep upon his brow,
 His heart hath been grief's hermitage ;
 But hidden where no eyes can see,
 His boyhood's love still lives for thee —

Still blooms above thy grave to-day,
 Where death hath harvested the land,
 Though such long years have passed away
 Since down the meadows hand in hand
 We went with hearts too full to know
 How deep their love was long ago.



December
 Nineteenth.

ASSURANCES.

I NEED no assurances, I am a man who is pre-occupied of his own soul ;
 I do not doubt that from under the feet and beside the hands and face I am cognizant of, are now looking faces I am not cognizant of, calm and actual faces,

- I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes
are limitless, in vain I try to think how limitless,
I do not doubt that the orbs and the systems of orbs
play their swift sports through the air on purpose,
and that I shall one day be eligible to
do as much as they, and more than they,
I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep on and on
millions of years,
I do not doubt interiors have their interiors, and exteriors
have their exteriors, and that the eyesight has another eyesight,
and the hearing another hearing, and the voice another voice,
I do not doubt that the passionately wept deaths of
young men are provided for, and that the
deaths of young women and the deaths of
little children are provided for,
(Did you think life was so well provided for, and
Death, the purport of all life, is not well provided for?)
I do not doubt that wrecks at sea, no matter what the
horror of them, no matter whose wife, child,
husband, father, lover, has gone down, are
provided for, to the minutest points,
I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen
anywhere at any time, is provided for in the
inherences of things,
I do not think life provides for all and for time and
space, but I believe heavenly Death provides
for all.

December
Twentieth.

MEMORIAL.

ALONE among thy books once more I sit ;
 No sound there stirs except the flapping fire :
 Strange shadows of old times about me flit
 As sinks the midnight lamp or flickers higher.
 I see thee pace the room ; with eye thought-lit
 Back, back thou com'st once more to my desire :
 Low-toned thou read'st once more the verse new writ,
 Too deep, too pure for worldlings to admire.
 That brow all honor, that all-gracious hand,
 That cordial smile and clear voice musical,
 That noble bearing, mien of high command
 Yet void of pride, — to-night I have them all.
 Ah, phantoms vain of thought ! The Christmas air
 Is white with flying flakes. Where art thou, where ?

* * * * *



December
Twenty-First.

RESURRECTION.

TRUST gives sweet peace to every living thing ;
 The wavering robin that in space has flown
 Finds its safe nest ; the germ of roses sown
 Waits, sure in darkness, for the touch of Spring ;
 The tendrils of the ivy blindly cling,
 Stretching their brown threads toward the wall un-
 known,
 To find a place secure, where, spite the moan
 Of rushing winds, they hang till soft airs sing.

We who love life fear most the mystic death ;
Yet we in death the self-same life shall live, —
This very life we know, — but glorified ;
And the fair temple which now holds our breath
Shall simply take the glory seraphs give, —
Renew its joys and say, “ I have not died ! ”



December
Twenty-Second.

BEREAVED.

LET me come in where you sit weeping, — aye,
Let me, who have not any child to die,
Weep with you for the little one whose love
I have known nothing of.

The little arms that slowly, slowly loosed
Their pressure round your neck — the hands you used
To kiss. — Such arms, such hands, I never knew :
May I not weep with you ?

Fain would I be of service — say some thing
Between the tears that would be comforting ;
But ah ! so sadder than yourselves am I,
Who have no child to die.

December BENEDICAM DOMINO.
 Twenty-Third.

THANK God for Life. Life is not sweet always ;
 Hands may be heavy-laden, heart care-full,
 Unwelcome nights follow unwelcome days,
 And dreams divine end in awakenings dull ;
 Still it is Life, and Life is cause for praise.
 This ache, this restlessness, this quickening sting,
 Prove me no torpid and inanimate thing,
 Prove me of Him who is of Life the spring :
 I am alive, — and that is beautiful.

Thank God for Love ; though Love may hurt and
 wound,
 Though set with sharpest thorns its rose may be.
 Roses are not of Winter ; all attuned
 Must be the earth, filled with soft stir, and free
 And warm, ere dawns the rose upon its tree.
 Fresh currents through my frozen pulses run,
 My heart has tasted Summer, tasted sun ;
 And I can thank Thee, Lord, although not one
 Of all the many roses blooms for me.

Thank God for Death. Bright thing with dreary name ;
 We wrong with mournful flowers her pure still brow ;
 We heap her with reproaches and with blame :
 Her sweetness and her fitness disallow
 Questioning bitterly the why and how.
 But calmly 'mid our clamor and surmise
 She touches each in turn and each grows wise,
 Taught by the light in her mysterious eyes, —
 I *shall* be glad, and I am thankful now.

TWO YEARS IN HEAVEN.

December

Twenty-Fourth.

O LITTLE feet, that with vain tenderness
We would have guarded on life's thorny way,
Withdrawn from touch of ours and dear caress,
On what far summits do you walk to-day?

O deep blue eyes ! O true and loving eyes,
From whose clear depths the light of Heaven
shone —

What visions waited you, what strange surprise,
What radiant glory have you looked upon?

O still, still lips, that moved not to our kiss,
Nor answered any word to our lament,
To what glad songs of satisfying bliss
Have you your sweet and childish accents lent?

Two years in Heaven ! The time seems long, Dear
Heart,

To us who falter on our way below ;
Our hearts, our hearts' desires, are where thou art,
Nor can we any rest from longing know.

O child of ours — dear child ! God's child and ours,
We yearn to see the welcome on thy face,
We long to listen, through uncounted hours,
To all thou hast to tell us of God's grace.

In God's own time we, too, shall be set free ;
The same strong hand which led thee from our side
Shall lead us to see Christ and be with thee,
And so shall our desire be satisfied.

December
Twenty-Fifth.

BELIEF.

LAUGH, you who never had
Your dead come back ; but do not take from me
The harmless comfort of my foolish dream :
That these our mortal eyes,
Which outwardly reflect the earth and skies,
Do introvert upon eternity ;
And that the shapes you deem
Imaginations just as clearly fall,
Each from its own divine original,
And through some subtle element of light,
Upon the inward spiritual eye,
As do the things which round about them lie,
Gross and material, on the external sight.



December
Twenty-Sixth.

TRUTH.

THOU must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach ;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul would reach ;
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.
Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed ;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed ;
Live truly, and thy Life shall be
A great and noble creed.

December IN THE HOSPITAL.
Twenty-Seventh.

I LAY me down to sleep
With little thought or care
Whether my waking find
Me here or — there !

A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest,
Unquestioning, upon
A loving breast.

My good right hand forgets
Its cunning now ;
To march the weary march
I know not how.

I am not eager, bold,
Nor strong, — all that is past ;
I am ready not to do
At last, — at last !

My half-day's work is done,
And this is all my part, —
I give a patient God
My patient heart ;.

And grasp His banner still,
Though all its blue be dim :
These stripes, no less than stars,
Lead after — Him.

December
Twenty-Eighth.

LIFE.

TEACH me to live ! 'T is easier far to die,
Gently and silently to pass away ;
On earth's long night to close the heavy eye
And waken in the glorious realm of day.

Teach me that harder lesson, — how to live,
To serve Thee in the darkest paths of life.
Arm me for conflict now, fresh vigor give,
And make me more than conqueror in the strife.

Teach me to live Thy purpose to fulfil ;
Bright for Thy glory let my taper shine ;
Each day renew, remould this stubborn will ;
Closer round Thee my heart's affections twine.

Teach me to live, no idler let me be,
But in thy service heart and hand employ,
Prepared to do thy bidding cheerfully, —
Be this my highest and my holiest joy.

Teach me to live, my daily cross to bear,
Nor murmur though I bend beneath its load.
Only be with me ; let me feel Thee near ;
Thy smile sheds gladness on the darkest road.

Teach me to live and find my Life in Thee,
Looking from earth and earthly things away,
Let me not falter, but untiringly
Press on, and gain new strength and power each
day.

December
Twenty-Ninth.

BURIED.

WE stand upon the churchyard sod and gaze
 Into the grave of our belovèd dead ;
We hear the solemn words of prayer and praise ;
 We mark the yew-trees waving overhead ;
We see the sunshine flicker on the grass, —
 The green grass of the graves, — and daisies white ;
Adown the lane the village children pass,
 And shyly pause to watch the holy rite.
Deep in the earth upon the coffin-lid
 Lies the last gift despairing love could make,
White scented blossoms that soon must be hid
 With all we loved, from eyes and hearts that ache.
Love, strong as life, was powerless to save ;
We can but strew fresh flowers upon the grave.

Yet in this grave, tear-moistened and new-made,
 Where we must leave the happiness of years,
May not a worthier sacrifice be laid
 Than even our fairest flowers or wildest tears ?
If we should bury with the pure white bloom
 A cherished folly or a secret sin,
It might make holier the silent tomb,
 Deepen the peace the dead lies folded in.
Oh, mute, cold grave ! that doth receive our lost,
 And with our lost the offerings of our love,
Take these things also ; we do count the cost,
 And God in Heaven doth, looking down, approve.
Sleep, Darling, sleep ; pray God that dies with thee
Which might have parted us eternally !

December
Thirtieth.

PATIENT.

I WAS not patient in that olden time,
When my unchastened heart began to long
For bliss that lay beyond its reach ; my prime
Was wild, impulsive, passionate, and strong.
I could not wait for happiness and Love
Heaven-sent, to come and nestle in my breast ;
I could not realize how time might prove
That patient waiting would avail me best.
" Let me be happy now," my heart cried out,
" In mine own way, and with my chosen lot ;
The future is too dark, and full of doubt,
For me to tarry, and I trust it not.
Take all my blessings, all I am and have,
But give that glimpse of Heaven before the grave !"

Ah me ! God heard my wayward, selfish cry,
And taking pity on my blinded heart,
He bade the angel of strong grief draw nigh,
Who pierced my bosom in its tenderest part.
I drank wrath's wine-cup to the bitter lees,
With strong amazement and a broken will ;
Then, humbled, straightway fell upon my knees,
And God doth know my heart is kneeling still.
I have grown patient ; seeking not to choose
Mine own blind lot, but take that God shall send,
In which, if what I long for I should lose,
I know the loss will work some blessed end,
Some better fate for mine and me than I
Could ever compass underneath the sky.

December THE OTHER LIFE.
Thirty-First.

THE poet, seer, and prophet, each declare,
From inner sight and heavenly visions rare,

That there is still another world than this,
Where men may dwell and find celestial bliss.

The Seer proclaims that in a world of light
Are wondrous scenes transcending mortal sight ;

That temples, gardens, precious stones, and gold
Appear in heavenly forms. And then we're told

That trees, sweet-scented shrubs, and odorous flowers
In that celestial paradise are ours ;

Fountains and rivers, groves, the fruitful plain,
Mountains and cloud-forms, stars and golden rain.

That lakes of crystal clearness there reflect
The skies above them ; and we may expect

Besides all these, fair cities, hills and plains,
And sound of music. And there still remains

To tell of colors, lucid, pure, and rare,
And forms of art ; for art itself is there.

There hath appeared before illumined eyes
A threefold Heaven, where the good and wise

May entrance find, and there commune with those
Who in the golden era thence arose.

The way is towards the East, and for a sign
The path is marked by olive-tree and vine.

Towards the South there stands upon a height,
A temple said to be a "form of Light."

Its walls of crystal and of sapphire stone
Transmitting light that shines from out the throne.

The laurel and the palm-tree mark the way
For those who journey thence in bright array,

And gathered there, to kneel at wisdom's shrine,
Are those in purple and in linen fine.

For garments there appear of every hue,
Inwrought with gold and hyacinthine blue ;

Enriched with jewels ; pearls and rubies shine
With flowers inwoven in unique design.

Wreaths of white lilies there appear to view
Entwined with roses of a violet hue ;

Birds of sweet song, and those of plumage bright,
Soft-cooing doves, and swans all snowy white.

In truth, all things that on the earth appear,
Attain perfection in that higher sphere.

If this is true, yet how, and whence, and where?
Of all false prophets shall we not beware?

Not mine the vision. Yet how strange it seemed!
And musing thus, I fell asleep, and dreamed.

An angel touched me on the shoulder,
Awake, arise! Lift up thine eyes
And look beyond this world material,
Where men do buy and sell
And dig for gold, and call that, living.
Thou, too, canst see the threefold Heaven
"Above and yet within" this world of matter.
Thou, too, canst dwell in light transcending
That which men call wisdom;
And by this light celestial scenes
Are visible; thus making known
The "other life" where hearts do speak
And thought from Love brings presence.
Ideas of space and time here vanish;
And those in like affections meet
And hold communion. To reach
The "other life" the steps ascend
Through science, reason, and intelligence.
The world of intellect is just within
The veil, where kindred spirits meet,
Hold converse, speculate, and doubt,
Not knowing true from false.
As yet they have not eyes to see

On wisdom's mount the temple shining
From its inner light. Nor can they wear
The purple. For garments in the "other life"
Are truths received and loved ; and wreaths
For those who "understand more deeply."
Above the world of intellect exists
A realm where memory is combined
With hints of future things,
And intimations of the Source of light.
This, in the language of the earth,
Is named imagination. Here, art comes forth,
Its essence still unknown, yet recognized
By the illumined ones, the laurel-crowned.

And still another life, "above
And yet within," not far to seek
But here and now. That inmost realm
Where man doth meet with God, and liveth ;
Yea, never lived till now, and never saw
Till now, the Source of all things good and worthy.
Now, doth he not announce, "Behold, what I create !"
But humbly saith, "There is but one Creator
By whom all things are made." This, the Divine Life,
The "other life," the life "above and yet within"
The things of outward sense ; and where may still
Be seen the olive-tree and vine, the gardens, moun-
tains,
Rivers, hills, and plains, for these are symbols
In that higher realm. Have ye not read

"Fine linen is the righteousness of saints"?
 To those who see the meaning of the symbol
 Is Heaven opened, and all things made new.
 In the "other life" is seen a truth
 In every flower, according to its kind;
 And thoughts of things above the earth
 In every bird that flies. In trees
 Perceptions take their form; and precious stones
 Foundation truths depict. For each and all
 From their inherent form and use
 Do shadow forth, and speak to those
 Who have the eyes to see, the ears to hear.
 And these announce "things heard and seen."
 Hast thou not also heard and seen?
 Already thou art in the "other life."
 "Lo! I have told you."

The angel then departing, soon were heard
 Far-distant tones which seemed from Heaven trans-
 ferred.

Familiar words were mingling in the song
 Intoned and chanted by a heavenly throng.

Sound of music, soft and low,
 Borne along in rhythmic flow,
 Messenger to men below.

Nunc licet.

Song of birds, revealing love,
While the swift descending dove
Brings the message from above.

Nunc licet.

Murmurs soft among the trees,
Gently swaying in the breeze,
Manifest what God decrees.

Nunc licet.

Then the fields take up the strain,
Flowers, fruits, and golden grain
Joining in the glad refrain :

Nunc licet.

Evening comes when day is done,
And the stars reflect the sun ;
Each proclaiming, one by one :

Nunc licet.

Precious stones and colors rare
Joyously the truth declare ;
Each and all the message bear :

Nunc licet.

And the "servant of the Lord,"
He who saw the open Word,
Humbly doth the truth record :

Nunc licet.

The sound of voices slowly died away ;
The rising sun announced a new-born day.

I woke and pondered ; then I knelt and prayed,
Gave thanks to God for all that He had made,

And for the vision He had sent to me,
For I was blind, indeed, but now I see.

And yet I thought I still had cause for grief.
“ Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief.”

And then there came from the All-Wise and Just
An inner consciousness of hope and trust.

Perception took the place of anxious thought,
And music from above this message brought :

Fear not, thou on bended knee.
Fear not, God doth care for thee,
And “ the Truth shall make you free.”

Nunc licet.

A Week of Sonnets.

Sunday Morning.

OUR bodies are the shadows of our souls,
And shadow only melts because of light,
As melts at morn the memory of the night,
When God the golden hour of day unrolls
And labor's tide sweeps high on time's stern shoals ;
Yet do our tongues grow dumb, our faces white,
That, from the watch-tower hid on memory's height,
Death's curfew for the dying ever tolls.
If somewhere hidden in the voiceless dark,
Where Love's lost mysteries in silence mould,
There be a bright existence, yet to mark
The zenith of a blessedness untold,
It is a happy moment when the spark
Of this first life expires in ashes cold.

Sunday Evening.

THE shadows linger, — lingering, they fall ;
 Darkness descends, yet tarries on its way ;
 Night draws her mantle gently o'er the day,
And twilight softly lingers above all.
We breathe once more : how weary is the breath,
 How tired the eyes, how misty all things seem, —
 Passing and fading, — till we cease to dream !
At last we see the dreaded face of Death
Look kindly on us through the clouds above ;
 And all our sad expectancy of fear
 Fades from our mind, while from afar we hear
Sweet songs of welcome to the land of Love ;
 And where we lay now only may be found
 The broken fetters that our souls have bound.

Monday Morning.

HERE would I sit and muse in pensive love
Of her who shines so bright in Heaven above,
When birds lament because they cannot pair,
Where leaves waft softly to the summer air,
On this green bank, where fragrant flowers are seen.
Beside the margin of yon murmuring stream,
She whom the earth conceals, in thought I see,
'Thus answers to my sighs, and pities me : —
“ Wherefore, alas ! that grievous flow of tears?
Weep not for me ! By death my earthly years
Became eternal ! and my then closed eyes
Awoke to brighter light beyond the skies !
Ah ! why consume thyself before thy time?
'There love is earthly — here it is divine ! ”

Monday Evening.

SOME seek, O God ! the boon of death from Thee ;
I ask a gift more sorrowful than death,
I who have waited twice with bated breath,
Yet tranquil, at death's gate. All wearily
I waited ; yet no voice called forth for me.
So, silent, I returned into the path
Of life. Now even as one that lingereth
Over some plan whose aim he could not see
Erewhile, but now, with spirit in it, longs
To accomplish ere the coming of the night ;
So I, amid the tumult and the strife
Of death and life, to which no task belongs,
Have found a lifework, even while the light
Of life is flickering ; and I pray for Life.

Tuesday Morning.

IF thou shouldst die, Belovèd, — fatal thought
That curdles all the blood along my veins,
And as with foul and poisonous vapor stains
The glad day's beauty, — though with anguish fraught
Our parting, I would fain be near, that nought
Might miss me of the swift and torturing pains
Such loss would nourish, — for my soul disdains
A peace of ignorance or oblivion bought.
And, Love ! I would not be the first to go,
Lest thy dear eyes might drop a single tear,
Remembering one who worshipped them so well ;
Or lest some sudden pang thy breast might know,
When, half forgetting, thou shouldst chance to hear
Some careless voice my name and story tell.

Tuesday Evening.

ATTIRED with heavenly light, the vestal moon
Doth traverse her dominion of the sky,
Advancing with a sweeter majesty
Than his, who is the fiery lord of noon ;
And round his shores the sea doth fret and swoon,
And heaves his surge with many a dolorous sigh,
That he, so lowly, loved of her, so high,
May only from afar with her commune ;
And yet though distant, and though veiled her face,
Through all his depths she still to him doth prove
Her influence tender, her affection sure, —
And though, Dear Love, awhile from my embrace
To radiant heights great Death should thee remove,
Yet would thy power to draw me still endure.

Wednesday morning.

SHE never said, "Lost is My Dearest One ;"
The phrase "not living" would have hushed her
song

Of faith. How could his silent voyage seem long
When she, whose joyless days had now begun,
Said "absent" with a smile which meant, the sun
Was only dimmed by clouds? Then, if a throng
Of painful thoughts pressed hard, it made her
strong

To think how he would wish life's duties done.
In her sweet face, where grief had left its seam,
A tender gladness dawned, as years took flight
And brought the meeting near. Nor did she dream
That from her trusting heart there shone a light
For eyes too weak to bear the larger gleam
That led her on, as stars redeem the night.

Wednesday Evening.

WHAT would life keep for me if thou shouldst go?
Belovèd, give me answer ; for my art
Is pledged unto thy service, and my heart
Apart from thee nor joy nor grace doth know.
No arid desert, no wide waste of snow,
Looks drearier to exiled ones who start
On their forced journey than, shouldst thou depart,
This fair green earth to my dead hope would show.
And like a drowning man who struggling clings
With stiffened fingers to the rope that saves,
Thrown out to meet his deep need from the land,
So to thy thought I hold when sorrow's wings
Darken the sky, and 'mid the bitterest waves
Of fate am succored by thy friendly hand.

Thursday Morning.

WE must be nobler for our dead, be sure,
Than for the quick. We might their living
eyes

Deceive with gloss of seeming ; but all lies
Were vain to cheat a prescience spirit-pure.

Our soul's true worth and aim, however poor,
They see who watch us from some deathless skies
With glance death-quicken'd. That no sad surprise
Sting them in seeing, be ours to secure.

Living, our loved ones make us what they dream ;
Dead, if they see, they know us as we are ;
Henceforward we must be, not merely seem.

Bitterer woe than death it were by far
To fail their hopes who love us to redeem :
Loss were thrice loss that thus their faith should mar.

Thursday Evening.

IT is the joy, it is the zest of life,
To know that Death, ungainly to the vile,
Is not a traitor with a reckless knife,
And not a serpent with a look of guile,
But one who greets us with a seraph's smile, —
An angel-guest to tend us after strife,
And keep us true to God when fears are rife,
And sceptic thought would daunt us or defile.
He walks the world as one empowered to fill
The fields of space for Father and for Son.
He is our friend, though morbidly we shun
His tender touch, — a cure for every ill.
He is the king of peace, when all is done.
Earth and the air are moulded to his will.

Friday Morning.

THERE'S not an hour but from some sparkling
beach

Go joyful men, in fragile ships to sail
By unknown seas to unknown lands. They hail
The freshening winds with eager hope, and speech
Of wondrous countries which they soon will reach.
Left on the shore, we wave our hands, with pale,
Wet cheeks, but hearts that are ashamed to quail
Or own the grief which selfishness would teach.
O Death, the fairest lands beyond thy sea
Lie waiting, and thy barks are swift and stanch
And ready. Why do we reluctant launch?
And when our friends their heritage have claimed
Of thee, and entered on it, rich and free,
Oh, why are we of sorrow not ashamed?

Friday Evening.

MY Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die ;
Albeit I ask no fairer life than this,
Whose numbering-clock is still thy gentle kiss,
While time and peace with hands enlockèd fly ;
Yet care I not where in eternity
We live and love, well knowing that there is
No backward step for those who feel the bliss
Of faith as their most lofty yearnings high :
Love hath so purified my being's core,
Meseems I scarcely should be startled, even
To find, some morn, that thou hadst gone before ;
Since, with thy love, this knowledge, too, was given,
Which each calm day doth strengthen more and
more, —
That they who love are but one step from Heaven.

Saturday Morning.

DEAR ! In some larger Life your soul will know
How fathomless the love that in me lies,
And I shall look with calm, untroubled eyes
Into your own, and starry-winged shall go —
Shaping my course with yours — the while I know
The space's magnitudes through which we rise,
Unmarvelling at the white infinities
That round and in us both will seem to flow.
Then with the mystic glory angels share,
Heart of my heart, you will look down on me,
And know the earthly shackles that we bear
From pinnacles of pain are smitten free,
That in the great eternal elsewhere
Love's largest power is love's large liberty.

Saturday Evening.

BUT yesterday I thought of Death as one
 Unkind, nay, cruel, insincere, and hard :
 Who came, and often ere we knew was gone,
 Taking our dear ones without regard
 To mental suffering. Death was to me
 A gaunt and grinning skeleton. I knew,
 Or thought I knew, Death was no friend. But see
 My error. Death's is a woman's hand. True,
 At first we do not feel the tenderness
 That guides the hand to suage the rack and pain
 Our loved ones suffer from ; but none the less
 The woman-angel, Death, comes to sustain
 And help us bear our burdens with a grace
 That must in time bring heavenly calm and peace.

FINALE.

DEAR Hearts, whose Love has been so sweet to
know,
That I am looking backward as I go,
Am lingering while I haste, and in this rain
Of tears of joy am mingling tears of pain ;
Do not adorn with costly shrub, or tree,
Or flower, the little grave which shelters me.
Let the wild wind-sown seeds grow up unharmed,
And back and forth all Summer, unalarmed,
Let all the tiny, busy creatures creep ;
Let the sweet grass its last year's tangles keep ;
And when, remembering me, you come some day
And stand there, speak no praise, but only say,
"How she loved us ! 'Twas that which made her
dear !"
Those are the words that I shall joy to hear.

Inderes.

INDEX TO TITLES.

	PAGE
A Comrade	134
Across the World I Speak to Thee	217
A Dream	145
After Death	132
After Death	137
After Years	203
Akosmism	180
All Beautiful Things	107
A Marriage Hymn	186
A Memory and a Presence	120
A Mother's Wail	135
An Artist's Model	169
A Reverie	221
A Rhymed Lesson	59
A Song at Twilight	80
A Song for the Girl I Love	106
A Song of the Day to the Night	67
A Speech of Silence	32
Assurances	222
At Eventide	68
At Peace	124
At Richmond	112
Awakening	152
A Year	125
 Bagley Wood	71
Before Sleeping	24

	PAGE
Belief	228
Benedicam Domino	226
Bereaved	225
Bereavement, Consolation, Substitution	182
Be Strong	171
Better Off	88
Blessed are they that Mourn	4
Buried	231
 Cold and Quiet	 34
Comfort	181
Creed	54
Crossing the River	93
 Death	 219
Death and Love	100
Death is but Sleep	16
Death's Alchemy	106
Death unto Life	57
Delusion: Who shall Declare It?	162
Duty	101
Dying	98
 Early Lost, Early Saved	 192
Ejaculatory Prayer	26
Elaine	94
Eleonora	138
 Finale	 256
Folded Hands	188
Francie	214
From the Invisible	69
 Grandmother	 13
Gray	159
Going to Sleep	33

	PAGE
Going to Sleep	126
Gone Seaward	151
Habit	138
He Leads us On	176
Hereafter	146
Her Wish	95
His Light	129
Homesick in Heaven	160
How does Death Speak of Our Beloved?	85
If	133
If I could Keep her So	27
If Only	3
In Common Things	39
In Memoriam	140
In Memory	187
In the Hospital	229
In the Shadow of Death	35
Io Victis!	165
I Thought our Love at Full	195
It is Well	10
I've been Thinking	82
I Yield Thee unto Higher Spheres	177
Later Life	74
Life	109
Life	230
Life and Death	25
Life and Death	49
Life and Death	161
Life in Death	190
Life in Death and Death in Life	96
Links with Heaven	70
Longings	122
Looking Within	72

	PAGE
Lost and Found	51
Love and Death	89
Love's Sacrifice	11
 Mater Dolorosa	 40
Memorial	224
Mizpah	28
My Boy	61
My Little Boy that Died	102
My Mother	79
 Night and Death	 194
Nos Morituri te Salutamus	45
Not Alone	64
 Of Late	 121
Oh, Fear not Thou to Die	12
Once in a While	56
On the Death of a Friend	204
 Patient	 232
Peace	60
Plighted Faith	65
Prayer in Sleep	212
Predestined	108
Presences	55
 Questionings	 41
Questions	7
 Recognition	 152
Regret	30
Resurgam	103
Resurrection	224
 Safe	 90
Saul of Gerontius	42

	PAGE
Silence	111
Silent Sounds	218
Since September	113
Sleep	174
Some Night	150
Sonnets in Shadow	196
Sorrow	166
Sorrow Past	43
Spring and Autumn	149
 The Angel in the House	 99
The Angel of Death	18
The Broken Toy	24
The Closet	14
The Departed Child	184
The Departure of the Swallow	179
The Everlasting Memorial	172
The Flown Soul	208
The Future	189
The Guiding Hand	201
The Last Music	81
The Last of the Earth	5
The Light within the Dark	220
The Lonely Landscape	210
The Loved and Lost	104
The Man survives	48
The Newly Wedded	6
The Ode of Change	168
The Other Life	233
The Other One	148
The Other Room	74
The Other Side	22
The Ponte di Paradiso	63
The Pulley	164
There	19
The Sick Man's Dream	21

	PAGE
The Transition	211
The Unknown Music	215
The Way the Baby Slept	209
The White Moth	142
Three Friends	68
Through a Glass Darkly	84
Thy Prayer is Granted	31
Tired Ones	144
To be Dead	180
To One in Heaven	128
To the End	20
Trust	216
Truth	228
Two Lives	110
Two Lives	119
Two Years in Heaven	227
Unbelief	191
Under the Leaves	130
Unseen	122
Until I saw her Dead	202
What a Dead Man Said	206
What Dying Is	52
What is to Come	139
What Might Have Been	91
What my Friend said to Me	53
When I Remember	30
When the Baby Died	8
Where	153
With us Still	15
Yesterday, To-day, and Forever	46

INDEX OF AUTHORS.

[In the following pages the figures in heavy type refer to pages in Vol. II., the others to Vol. I.]

	PAGE		PAGE
ADAMS, OSCAR FAY . . .	216	Chapman, E. R.	100
Adcock, A. St. John . . .	52, 21	Chapman, Mary Berri . . .	175, 65
Aidé, Hamilton	50	Charles, Elizabeth Rundle . .	85
Aldrich, Anne Reeve . . .	80, 121	Choate, Mary Amelia . . .	83
Alford, Henry	220	Clapp, Mabelle Parker . . .	81
Arnold, Edwin	132	Clough, Arthur Hugh . . .	84
Atteridge, Helen	8	Coleridge, Samuel Taylor . .	68
Avary, Myrta Lockett . . .	227	Collier, Thomas S.	97
		Cooke, Rose Terry	49
Bartlett, Mary Russell . . .	10	Coolbrith, Ina D. 7, 193, 3 , 124	
Bates, Arlo . iii, 173, 196 , 250		Cornwell, Henry S.	85
Battersby, Caryl	24	Craik, Dinah Maria Mulock . .	102
Beatty, Pakenham	3		
Beeching, Henry Charles . .	41	Darmesteter, Agnes Mary	
Bell, Mackenzie	61, 120	Frances Robinson	214, 149
Bensel, James Berry	180	Dean, Lola Marshall	19
Bethune, George W.	192	Dickinson, Emily	44
Bickersteth, Edmund Henry .	46	Doudney, Sarah	112
Boden, C. J.	228	Drake, Maria Upham	11
Bonar, Horatius	11, 172	Dryden, John	138
Boynton, Julia	142	Duff, Clara Grant	57
Bragg, John	35		
Brooks, Charles Timothy . .	25	Egan, Maurice Francis	224
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett .	81,		
	182	Fagan, C. G.	159
Bryant, William Cullen . . .	152, 4	Fanshawe, Reginald	57, 110
Bulwer-Lytton, Edward		Farwell, Martha Jane Packard .	41
Robert, "Owen Meredith" .	185	Field, Michael	31
		Foxcroft, Frank	68, 227
Carpenter, Mabelle Vilas . .	23	French, Elizabeth	181
Carter, Lillian W.	150	French, Emma Isidor Day	
Cary, Alice	90, 228		149, 156
Chadwick, John White . . .	24, 126,		
	156, 178, 22 , 45 , 69 , 152 , 153	Gale, Norman R.	91
Chandler, Horace Parker . .	15, 27,	Gannett, William Channing .	79
	116, 16 , 51 , 78 , 95 , 138	Gay, William	53, 108 , 247

	PAGE		PAGE
Grant, L. Morrison	245	McGaffey, Ernest	56, 133
Grey, Oliver	112	McKenzie, William P.	136
Hayden, Alma Pendexter	54	Meeker, C. E.	49
Heath, Clara B.	69	Merivale, Herman Charles	127
Henley, William Ernest	30, 38, 139	Meynell, Alice C. Thompson	48, 145, 67
Herbert, George	164	"Miss Mulock." (See Craik.)	
"H. H." (See Jackson.)		"Monckton Milnes." (See Houghton.)	
Higginson, Mary Thacher	248	Monkhouse, William Cosmo	148
Hodges, E. F.	86	Moore, Emily H.	23
Holmes, Oliver Wendell	59, 160	Morris, Lewis	168
Hooker, John	92	Moulton, Louise Chandler	64, 182, 192, 19, 27, 61
Houghton, Richard Monckton Milnes	204	Newman, John Henry	42
Howitt, William	179	Noble, James Ashcroft	144, 31
Howland, Mary Woolsey	229	Noel, C. M.	155
Hugo, Victor	49, 111	Oliphant, E. Blair	74
Hunt, James Henry Leigh	79	Osgood, Kate Putnam	5, 169
Ingelow, Jean	30, 34	O'Shaughnessy, Arthur William Edgar	176
Jackson, Helen Fiske Hunt	88, 160, 229, 8, 103, 252, 256	"Owen Innsley." (See Jennison.)	
Jennison, Lucy White	101, 246	"Owen Meredith." (See Bulwer-Lytton.)	
Johnson, Lionel	71, 81, 187	Panton, J. E.	103
Klingbe, George	144	Patterson, Jane Lippitt	129
Kroeker, Kate Freiligrath	204	Paull, M. E.	40
Lang, Andrew	111	Payne, John	193
Lathrop, George Parsons	208	Peck, Henry Thurston	148
Lathrop, Rose Hawthorne	214	Pennell, Harriette G.	211
Lee, Anna Collier	233	Petersen, Frederic	22, 52, 215
Leighton, Robert	65, 89, 55, 72, 101, 202, 220	Phalen, Frank Low	219, 171
Leyton, Frank	243	Pierpont, John	184
Liddell, Christina Catherine	26, 115, 68, 93	Pratt, Charles Howard	37
Lincoln, Ellen Fessenden	60	Procter, Adelaide Anne	20, 76, 18, 70, 96
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth	14	Rexford, Eben Eugene	12
Lowell, James Russell	32, 105, 120, 195, 253	Riley, James Whitcomb	206, 209, 225
Macdonald, George	124	Robertson, Alice Kent	66
Mackay, Eric	187, 251	Robertson, Eric S.	51
Mar, Helen	104	Robinson, Agnes Mary Frances. (See Darmes-teter.)	
Marshall, Emma	18, 145	Robinson, Joshua D.	96
Marzials, Frank T.	87		

	PAGE		PAGE
Rossetti, Christina Georgina	38,	Timrod, Henry	135
	74, 161	Townsend, Mary Ashley	54
Ruckert, Friedrich	25	Trench, Richard Chenevix	107
Rutland, Lucile	47	Tuttle, Emma Rood	162
Salmon, Arthur L.	43	Uhland, Ludwig	204
Saltus, Edgar Everton	180	Vere, Aubrey de	224
Sanborn, Franklin Benjamin	200	Walker, Caroline Armstrong	15
Sangster, Margaret Elizabeth	188	Walker, William Sidney	106
Sassin, Algernon	20	Ward, Elizabeth Stuart	
Savage, Minot Judson	16, 122,	Phelps	99
	207, 230, 39, 88, 126, 195	Webb, C. Abby Morrison	64
Schayer, Julia	203	Webster, Augusta	62, 109, 162,
Scott, Frederick George	221		167, 169, 179, 214, 134, 151
Shurtleff, Ernest Warburton	36,	Wentworth, Henry Stoddard	7
	134, 13, 25, 118, 242	Wesley, Charles	171
Smith, May Louise Riley	183	Westall, John	14, 211
Southey, Caroline Bowles	12	White, Blanco	194
Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn	6	Whiting, Lilian	102, 108, 189,
Stedman, Edmund Clarence	6, 60		113, 122
Stirling, John	48	Whitman, Walt	222
Stone, Cara E. Whitton	191	Whitney, Adeline Dutton	
Story, William Wetmore	165, 177	Train	71, 217
Stuart, G. B.	5	Whittier, John Greenleaf	202, 205
"Susan Coolidge." (See		Wilcox, Ella Wheeler	94, 206,
Woolsey.)			223, 32
Swain, Charles	109	Winslow, Helen Maria	212, 213,
Symonds, John Addington	213,		137
	63, 128	Winthrop, Augusta G.	189
Taylor, Bayard	58	Woolsey, Sarah Chauncey	4, 28,
Tennyson, Alfred	73, 201, 94, 140		91, 125, 146
Thaxter, Celia Leighton	166		
Thomas, Edith Matilda	217		

INDEX OF FIRST LINES.

	PAGE
A broken toy! what memories cling	24
Across the world I speak to thee	217
After the day's long playing	126
A gradual failing in the summer light	158
Ah! fair face gone from sight	187
Ah! life was sweet and deep, when she was here	78
Ah, she was not an angel to adore	90
All beautiful things bring sadness, nor alone	107
Alone among thy books once more I sit	224
A merry tiresome child, an hour ago	151
Am I alive or dead? I am not dead	42
And is the swallow gone?	179
And there before me flashed a morning gleam	21
As one who to some long-locked chamber goes	180
A song for the girl I love	106
As precious gums are not for lasting fire	138
Attired with heavenly light, the vestal moon	247
 Because of one small low-laid head all crowned	 40
Belovèd one, who entered, last Autumn	113
Beside the meadow bars the lowing cows	118
Be strong!	171
Between two breaths what crowded mysteries lie	59
But yesterday I thought of Death as one	255
 Calmly, breathe calmly all your music, maids!	 81
Climbing the mountain's shaggy crest	22

	PAGE
Cold, My Dear, — cold and quiet	34
Come not again! I dwell with you	208
Dear Grandmother, there was no brow more beautiful than thine ?	13
Dear Hearts, whose Love has been so sweet to know	256
Dear! In some larger Life your soul will know	254
Dear Lord! Lost in Thee	51
Dear ones, who passed, with lingering breath	7
Death — is it death?	5
Death! There is not any death; only infinite change	168
Death unto Life — Had that death been but mine	57
Deem not that they are blest alone	4
Do any hearts ache there, beyond the peaceful river?	19
Do not think of her with death	49
Do we indeed desire the dead	140
Farewell, farewell to thee, Belovèd One!	65
From dawn to dusk, and from dusk to dawn	67
"From henceforth no more twain, but one "	186
Gethsemane	11
"Give back my child!" I plead that day	203
God in His heart made Autumn for the young	149
Gray stones, and there be many such hereby	159
Hear what a dead man said to me	206
Heaven is a state of fine resolve, I deem	152
He leads us on	176
Here would I sit and muse in pensive love	244
"He's better off." With words like these	88
He sees when their footsteps falter	174
How does Death speak of our Belovèd	85
How seldom, Friend! a good great man inherits	68
How strange is death to Life, and yet how sure	48
Hush, human soul, that liest at His feet!	68

	PAGE
"I am Joy," she said; but her voice was low	134
I believe if I were dead	54
I cannot make him dead!	184
I cannot see, with my small human sight	216
I could not think what gave her that fine beauty	202
If a leaf rustled, she would start	142
"If he would only help me but once more!"	122
If I could hold your hands to-night	122
If only in my dreams I once might see	3
If the dread day that calls thee hence	96
If there should come a time, as well there may	181
If thou shouldst die, Belovèd,—fatal thought	246
If when her eyes meet mine my eyes are sealed	133
If yonder sun had an eternal voice	25
I had a dream last night	145
I had a little bird once	61
I hold	103
I know not whether in some distant, unknown sphere	64
"I know what silence means!"	111
I lay me down to sleep	229
I loved a child as we should love	214
I'm not where I was yesterday	204
I need no assurances, I am a man	222
In life our absent friend is far away	74
In some lone walk through sunburnt fields	93
I reach a duty, yet I do it not	101
I saw our Darling in my dreams	212
I saw you, knew you were mine	108
I sing the Hymn of the Conquered	165
Is this the way, my Father?—"T is, My Child	201
I thought our Love at full, but I did err	195
It is easy enough to be pleasant	56
It is the joy, it is the zest of life	251
I've been thinking of home, of "My Father's house"	82
I was not patient in that olden time	232
I yield thee unto higher spheres	177

	PAGE
Just a little baby, lying in my arms	27
Laugh, you who never had	228
Lay your hand, Sweet Wife, in mine	80
Let me come in where you sit weeping, — aye	225
Life is not sweet. One day it will be sweet	161
Life's not your own, — 't is but a loan	109
Look in his pretty face for just one minute	102
Love, on your grave in the ground	2
Love willed that Death should occupy the house	100
Methought I walked along a pleasant way	69
My Babe! My tiny Babe! My only Babe!	135
My fears were more than the reality	219
My Love, I have no fear that thou shouldst die	253
Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew	194
New being is from being ceased	190
Not, Heavenly Father, that we ask or hope	45
Not lost, not dead, not gone, not even sleeping	15
Now is the dead of night, and I must sleep	24
Now the rite is duly done	6
O days of Summer and sunshine, of roses white and red	35
Of all the mysteries wherethrough we move	63
O Friend of Mine!	20
Oh, fear not thou to die	12
Oh, gates that were left ajar	129
Oh, that word — Regret!	30
Oh, thou whose precious memory needs no speech	iii
O little feet, that with vain tenderness	227
O tender love of long ago	221
Our bodies are the shadows of our souls	242
Our God in Heaven, from that holy place	70
Pale, withered hands that more than fourscore years	188
Passing out of the shadow	98
Peace! What do tears avail?	60

	PAGE
Seek not afar for beauty. Lo! it glows	39
She has been just a year in Heaven	125
She murmur'd "Vain, in vain: it cannot be"	94
She never said, "Lost is My Dearest One"	248
Shut close the wearied eyes, O sleep!	124
So early lost, I cannot tell the lift	79
So many things there might have been	91
Some night, when shadows shiver in the garden ways	150
Some seek, O God! the boon of death from Thee	245
So tired	144
Sweet friends! What the women lave	132
Sweet little maid with winsome eyes	148
Teach me to live! 'T is easier far to die	230
Thank God for Life. Life is not sweet always	226
That is her body lying there	153
The earth is new—it was thy love	128
"The loved and lost"! Why do we call them lost?	104
The night is full of stars, full of magnificence	71
The place again	210
The poet, seer, and prophet, each declare	233
There is no grief on earth, however fell	26
There is no room within thy house like this	14
There is no unbelief	191
There's not an hour but from some sparkling beach	252
There was a time when I could think of death	121
The shadow has gone by	43
The shadows linger,—lingering, they fall	243
The solemn sea of silence lies between us	32
The sun-god's parting shafts of gold	112
The ways of death are soothing and serene	38
They err who tell us that the spirit unclothed	46
They say that thou wert lovely on thy bier	106
Thick green leaves from the soft brown earth	130
This is the way the Baby slept	209
This, My Love, is the month Thou first saw light	200

	PAGE
This pleasant room, you say, holds all I need	74
Though faith be dead, yet will our hope outrun	196
Thou must be true thyself	228
Three pairs of dimpled arms, as white as snow	99
Thy prayer is granted: thou hast joined the choir	31
'Tis said in dying one can often hear	215
To leave the turmoil and the careful tumult	52
To what dark chambers of the heart or brain	55
Trouble? Dear Friend, I know her not. God sent	53
Trust gives sweet peace to every living thing	224
Turn back the picture to the wall	169
'T was in that other land, across	137
Two lives—my life and hers	110
Two names upon a yew-tree rudely cut	119
Two tireless little feet all day have trotted	33
Up and away, like the dew of the morning	172
Upon my lips she laid her touch divine	166
Well, maybe it is delusion	162
We must be nobler for our dead, be sure	250
We never used the word while thou and I	28
We sat together, each one vexed	41
We stand upon the churchyard sod and gaze	231
We think of heavenly bliss, and cast our eyes	220
What is it to be dead? I think that I	180
What is to come we know not. But we know	139
What may we take into that vast forever?	189
What we, when face to face we see	84
What would life keep for me if thou shouldst go?	249
When clasping in mine own the hand	120
When daylight fades, and night returns	211
When God at first made man	164
When He who giveth, takes again	16
When I am gone, I mean from earthly sight	95
When I remember something which I had	30

	PAGE
When some Beloveds 'neath those eyelids lay	182
When souls that have put off their mortal gear	152
When the baby died	8
When the end comes, and we must say "good-by" . . .	89
When we are dead, when you and I are dead	146
Why do we fail so oft to show the love	138
Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death . .	18
Within her downy cradle there lay a little child . . .	192
Ye know me not, sweet sisters? All in vain	160
Yes; it is well! The evening shadows lengthen . . .	10
Ye who in spirit are not yet awake	72
You do not hear it? unto me	218



